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ABSTRACT

This guide explains the concept of marketing tech prep and provides marketing principles and strategies to promote tech prep programs. The guide covers the following topics: (1) why it is necessary to market tech prep; (2) what a comprehensive tech prep marketing plan should include; (3) targeting the benefits message; (4) marketing tech prep to other educators, counselors, employers, students, and parents; and (5) how to budget for and evaluate marketing activities. Three appendixes contain the following: names, positions, and addresses of persons quoted in the guide; an annotated bibliography listing 30 references; and a chart with quick explanations that can be used to help answer frequently asked questions about tech prep. (KC)

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Tech Prep Marketing Guide

by Dr. Patty Williamson

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About the Author

Patty Williamson spent 27 years in school public relations and administration. She retired in June 1993 to become a full-time free-lance writer and public relations/marketing consultant. She is immediate past president of the National Association for Vocational-Technical Education Communicators and a member of AVA's Public Information Committee. She has taught graduate classes in public relations and communications at St. Louis and Webster universities, has developed and administered an extensive community education program, spent seven years working with the technical high schools in the St. Louis metro area as part of the school desegregation plan and has received more than 25 state and national awards for outstanding publications and marketing activities for vocational education programs. She can now be reached at Williamson, Wordsmith; 1935 Dyer Ave., St. Louis, MO 63114, 314-429-1831.

Author's Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to the many practitioners across the country who were interviewed and provided outstanding materials for this guide. Your enthusiasm and commitment are inspiring. The future of tech prep is in good hands!

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Special thanks also to Mary Byrski, director of the Southern Maryland Educational Consortium, which supplied the pictures used on the cover of this guide, and to the school systems and consortia whose materials are referenced in the guide.

—Patty Williamson

Introduction

Tech prep programs are being implemented across the face of America. These programs rest on agreements hammered out by teachers, curriculum designers and administrators at secondary and postsecondary institutions. They are not all cut from the same mold. But they all have in common the need to attract and hold students in a rigorous course of study.

That's where marketing comes in. Educators who are involved in tech prep programs must see that those programs are marketed to the right audiences, which you'll discover in this guide, are many.

While individual tech prep programs may look and feel a little different from one another, the same marketing principles and strategies can be used to promote the tech prep concept. And in this guide you will find a full explanation of the concept and those principles and strategies.

What's more, the descriptions of many successful marketing plans, explanations about how budgets were developed and administrative approvals gotten, are in the words of tech prep practitioners in the field. In the pages of this guide, marketing theory is matched with marketing results and savvy from people who have developed and run marketing plans.

We are fortunate in having Patty Williamson as the author of this guide. She spent 27 years in school public relations and administration with the St. Louis public school system before retiring into a second career as a writer and public relations and marketing consultant. She has a PhD in education administration, and she has taught graduate classes in public relations and communications at St. Louis and Webster universities and developed and administered an extensive community education program.

In developing this guide, Williamson spent many hours examining books and manuals on tech prep and educational marketing, and she interviewed scores of educators across the country who are involved with tech prep programs. The names, positions and addresses of those quoted in the guide can be found in the Appendix. Also in the Appendix are an annotated bibliography and a useful chart with quick explanations that can be used to help answer frequently asked questions about tech prep.

Because tech prep is still a new concept to many, effective marketing programs are especially critical. The American Vocational Association is proud to continue its commitment to help vocational-technical educators meet current challenges by offering this comprehensive marketing guide. We trust it will be an invaluable resource as practitioners work to spread the good news about tech prep and to make it an essential part of our nation's education system.

Chapter 1

Why It's Necessary to Market Tech Prep

"If you build it, he will come."

– W. P. Kinsella
Field of Dreams

In *Field of Dreams*, it was only necessary to build a baseball diamond in an Iowa cornfield and wait for Shoeless Joe to arrive. In real life, however, people don't appear by magic. No matter how good tech prep is – and many are convinced it's the movement that will finally save American education – business and industry representatives, educators, parents and students won't sign on until they are aware of it, understand it and **believe in it**.

Creating that belief requires a strong marketing campaign. Generally, marketing means giving people solid information about a product or service so they can form sound opinions about it. In the context of tech prep, marketing involves creating awareness, shaping the identity of the tech prep program and educating the public about the benefits and opportunities tech prep offers. In some cases, it also involves changing people's perceptions about vocational-technical education and the relative value of a baccalaureate degree.

Marketing primarily involves reinforcing attitudes that are already held. In some parts of the country, tech prep has roots in 2+2 programs dating back to the mid-1980s. In these communities, people **know** that tech prep can revitalize teachers, give students new direction and focus and cause employers to trust the education system to produce capable workers.

In most states, however, tech prep is in its infancy. Communities in these states are still lining up business and industry partners, forging articulation agreements and developing curriculum. In these communities—where people haven't yet seen the results of tech prep—marketing is vital. Even products (like tech prep) that are so good they "sell them-

The Goals of Tech Prep Marketing

1. To make the public aware of the many and diverse careers tech prep offers.
2. To familiarize the community with the tech prep concept, terminology and approach to education.
3. To build awareness of tech prep as a successful answer to flaws in secondary and postsecondary education.
4. To dispel myths and enhance positive understanding of vocational and technical education.
5. To build a good working relationship with the media.
6. To build a wide base of community support for tech prep education.
7. To build strong enrollment.
8. To build strong parental support and understanding.
9. To encourage faculty pride, involvement and commitment for tech prep.
10. To accurately communicate the costs/savings of the tech prep approach.
11. To communicate the continuing successful impact tech prep has on students.
12. To encourage business/ industry/labor participation and awareness of tech prep as a resource for workforce development.
13. To promote the concept of lifelong learning.

—*Tech Prep Indiana*, Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

selves" can't do it if no one has heard about them. Marketing also can correct any misperceptions people might have based on their limited knowledge.

"There is not a clear understanding about what tech prep is among either the business or the education sector," says Laurel Adler, project director of the Los Angeles Area Tech Prep Consortium and superintendent of the East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program in West Covina, California. "Even vocational educators have preconceived notions, and many take a very narrow definition. We need to market tech prep in a way that clarifies what it is, including all the opportunities it offers."

Two components underlie all successful marketing:

- Discovering what people want;
- Then telling them how your product meets their needs. Tech prep is a natural in this respect, because it truly has something for everyone.

But **what** exactly to market in the case of tech prep? Most practitioners have no qualms about selling tech prep—with or without obvious links to vocational-technical education. Others, perhaps wary because of the educational movements they've seen wax and wane through the years, soft-pedal the program name and focus on its good results.

Ben Helmandollar, director of the Roanoke Area Tech Prep Consortium in Virginia, takes the latter course. "We don't want to get caught up in 'just another education program coming down the pike,' so we market **results**, not 'tech prep – here it comes!,'" he says. "If it changes tomorrow, we can still say, 'This is what we're doing that works, whether it's called tech prep or something else.'"

Results are critical in selling tech prep, yet they're only one of its many strengths. The multiplicity of strengths gives you all kinds of angles to use in marketing your program.

Perhaps tech prep's most obvious strength is that it represents change – change from the old days when lots of kids slipped through the cracks to a new system where every student has a chance to succeed.

"We have to market tech prep because it involves a change in expectations," says Sarah Davis, director of the tech prep program for Christian County Schools in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. "We must convince students and the public to expect **more**. The only way they can learn to expect a K-14 system is by educating them through a marketing approach."

Davis' emphasis on changing people's expectations is echoed by Myrtle Stogner, executive director of the North Carolina Tech Prep Leadership Development Center. "Tech prep has to be marketed as a total education reform issue," Stogner says. "If we aren't clear in our minds exactly what it is, we don't have anything to market. Glitz and glitter won't do any good, if a program isn't teaching differently and hasn't raised the level of expectations. We must show that something different is happening in math, science and language and have the objective data to back it up."

The "change" message must reach everyone affected by tech prep, says Leslie Mack Evans, who directs a consortium in Fremont, Ohio. "There are so many different players – internal and external customers – who are also, in many cases, the developers," she says. "Everyone needs to be made aware. They all need to have a part and understand that tech prep is not education reformation, but transformation."

Of course, change frightens some people. The goal of tech prep is no different from what the best of other educational reforms have promised – to prepare students for life. But it **is** different from other programs people have seen before. Even though tech prep's strengths lie in these differences, the public won't appreciate tech prep until it is familiar and comfortable with the concept.

Tech prep can be threatening to those who don't understand it – especially educators.

The key to countering the lack of understanding is information. It should be provided frequently, in various formats, in easy-to-comprehend language and with an emphasis that varies according to the needs and interests of different audiences.

Changes you'll need to explain include:

- Tech prep, unlike many educational programs, appeals to a large portion of the student population. Dale Parnell, long-time president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, emphasized its value for the middle half of the student population in his 1985 book, *The Neglected Majority*. The Perkins legislation recognizes tech prep's potential in broad terms, and most tech prep programs target all or nearly all students.

- Tech prep creates high expectations for **all** students. This makes it harder for young people to float through high school, taking easy courses to meet minimum requirements and graduating with neither the technical

skills to find a good job nor the strong academic base they need to succeed in college.

- Tech prep links the classroom and the vocational lab through applied academics. It helps students see the reasons for learning and gives them practical experience they can use on the job. They "learn to learn" so they can adapt to the inevitable changes that will occur throughout their working years. The knowledge that they are acquiring salable skills builds pride in students and pride in honest work. This new student pride also goes a long way toward allaying the qualms teachers may have about plunging into something new.

- Tech prep requires early commitment by students and their parents to a goal that is at least four years away.

- Tech prep asks parents (and many educators) to give up the belief that a four-year college degree is the only sure way to success. It also asks them to buy into a program that some consider to be "warmed-over vocational education." In many parts of the country, of course, vocational-technical education continues to be highly regarded. In these places, tech prep's link to voc ed is an advantage. In other areas, however, voc ed's reputation is tarnished, and educators are working hard to distance themselves from it. These educators stress that tech prep is a separate movement with a different methodology, an improved curriculum, more broad-based community involvement and vastly improved results.

Those results translate directly into jobs, a key point in many tech prep marketing plans. "We need to make tech prep jobs credible and glamorous and make people aware that those jobs exist in many fields – arts/media, health care, business, etc.," Helmandollar says. "The first challenge of marketing is to find out what jobs are available and create awareness that there are growing numbers of jobs in fields very few are seeking. We have to get the message out there that unless you combine life-long work and life-long education, you're not going to have a job at all. Tech prep provides a new way to do that."

Emphasizing tech prep jobs requires convincing students, parents and educators that a four-year college degree isn't the only road to success. "We have to market to play catch-up," says Steve Olczak, director of the St. Mary's County Technical Center in Maryland. "We have spent the last 40 years convincing the public that every kid needs a baccalaureate degree. Our schools are built around the concept that every kid will get this degree, and this idea is so far off

base that it just isn't believable any more. We have created a monster.

"We have all sorts of kids coming through school that don't know what they want to do except go to college. They don't know **why**, but hey, they go anyway and after a semester they're out of there. Those who graduate with a liberal arts degree have no job skills. We have created a disaster that is not only waiting to happen, but is unfolding right now, and that disaster is a workforce with no skills. In the current marketplace, tech prep is one of the viable alternatives for kids to get quality skills and a career that will last a lifetime. Our kids really haven't been led in the direction of making a connection to the world of work. They are given all this incentive in the academic arena that, when they leave school, doesn't lead to a job.

"We have to play catch-up so that kids understand the realities of the workplace. Tech prep emphasizes postsecondary, and that is important. It stresses academic skills, which are critical. We are talking about some high-ticket careers and some real important jobs that need to be done. The tech prep graduate is the kind of kid who can master those jobs," says Olczak.

Convincing parents of tech prep's value in preparing their children for the workplace isn't hard, according to Diana Walter, executive director of the Partnership for Academic and Career Education (PACE) in South Carolina. "They need to have their minds opened a little bit and become better consumers of education," she says. "Most parents have been watching TV and reading the papers and have seen the coverage about unemployed and underemployed college graduates. Recent articles in *U.S. News and World Report* and *Fortune* and national TV reports have helped them be more realistic about four-year college options."

Walter also emphasizes good careers in selling tech prep. "We're not marketing the community college, but careers and clusters," she says. "If you can get students, counselors, teachers and parents excited about where this is heading, the education pieces will fall right into place. Students are excited about their classes and they are excited about enrolling in the community college, because they are excited about where they're **going** with their education."

Walter believes it's also important to help students understand that a four-year degree isn't something they have only one chance to get in their lifetime. "We stress that it's not a case of 'blow it now and that's it,'" she says.

Alliances

Another major strength of tech prep you can emphasize is the horizontal and vertical alliances it creates. Consider some of the alliances tech prep creates:

- Technical and academic teachers work together to build a curriculum that complements and reinforces both disciplines.
- High schools and postsecondary institutions join forces to create articulation agreements that allow high school students to earn college credit and to move on to college with the background, confidence and determination they need to succeed.
- The business/industrial community becomes a true partner with education, involved at every stage from curriculum development to internships for both students and teachers.
- Parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's education, beginning no later than eighth grade. They are asked to help their son or daughter draft an educational plan encompassing high school and at least two years of college. In recent years, schools have often been accused of resisting parental involvement. Tech prep both invites and expects strong parental involvement.
- Students become full members of the team, with the opportunity to shape their own destiny. This may be the most important difference of all. With a clear pathway to success in front of them, they know what is required each year if they are to achieve their goal. The knowledge that they control their own lives creates a focus and determination that is new for many.

When to Market Tech Prep

When you market is just as important as **what** you market. For an existing program, practitioners agree that information campaigns must begin long before a student is ready to enroll in tech prep. Ideally, they should begin in the primary grades and certainly no later than middle school.

Practitioners do **not** agree on when marketing should start for a new tech prep program. Some feel strongly that it must start as soon as planning begins, creating a demand for the program before it's actually in place. They believe the anticipation that develops among parents and students puts pressure on schools to become involved. On the other hand, some believe just as strongly that there's a great danger of

losing credibility if people become excited about tech prep and then discover it isn't yet available.

Fran Holm, tech prep coordinator for Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville, Florida, credits the success of her tech prep program to a strong marketing effort that coincided with initial efforts at program planning. Holm, her counterpart at the high school level with Alachua County Schools and their colleagues made more than 200 presentations to civic clubs, faculty groups and the Council for Economic Outreach. At each presentation they distributed brochures they'd prepared for different audiences. As a result of the speeches, parents began to call schools to find out what tech prep programs were available. "Marketing puts pressure on schools to become involved," Holm says. Today every high school in the county is part of the consortium, and about 2,800 students are enrolled in 34 program areas.

Susan Quattrociocchi, director of the Northeast Tech Prep Consortium in Bellevue, Washington, also believes in early marketing. "What you do is **create a demand**," she says. "A lot of people say you can't market tech prep until you've done all the curriculum work, but our approach is to create an excitement among students that helps along the process of creating the curriculum. It's a risky venture, but the concept is so exciting to business and industry, parents and kids that they are immediately attracted to it."

Our approach is to create an excitement among students that helps along the process of creating the curriculum.

—Susan Quattrociocchi, director of the Northeast Tech Prep Consortium in Bellevue, Washington

However, others believe marketing of new programs should wait. "Marketing is one of those glitzy, fun things everyone likes to sit around and talk about," says Ohio's Evans, director of the Tech Prep 2000 Consortium based at Terra Technical College in northwest Ohio. "There's a desire to get into it right away, but you can't do a marketing campaign for something that doesn't even exist yet. Some very powerful and strong-willed people really wanted to start marketing as soon as our consortium was formed in 1986. They got very upset with those who wanted to wait, but the best thing we ever did was to **not** go out and tell everyone about something that didn't exist.

"We talked to people who said they lost a great deal of credibility, especially with counselors, because they marketed too soon," Evans adds. "So we laid low. Hardly anyone knew we were involved in tech prep, although we had a massive curriculum project underway. Our first marketing effort was an internal newsletter, which has been a major success."

Adler agrees with Evans. "Wait until you have something to market, even if it's only one program," she says. "Once you

start talking about tech prep, people will want to see it. If you have nothing to show, you will have hurt – rather than helped – your program." Adler recommends planning marketing as you develop the rest of your program. When you have something concrete in place, start with a small audience and gradually broaden the marketing campaign's scope.

"Explain what it really is you're talking about – benefits for students, the community, the economy and the country as a whole," Adler says. "Stress what it will do for business and industry. Use marketing to form partnerships and get help. As people hear about it and learn how they can play a role in it, they want to become involved."

While not everyone agrees when a marketing campaign should begin, there is no disagreement that, once begun, it must be on-going. Every successful marketer knows that people need lots of information before they can understand a new program, accept it and become a part of it. You must tell them, over and over, what tech prep can do for them, for their child or for their business.

That factor – "what's in it for me?" – guides most people in picking everything from peanut butter to a spouse. It's the same factor they consider when deciding whether to "buy" tech prep. Thus, the bottom line for any tech prep marketing campaign is clear: to make sure that every staff member, parent, student, business person and community resident receives a strong "what's-in-it-for-me" message.

Chapter 2

What a Comprehensive Tech Prep Marketing Plan Should Include

Chapter 1 should have convinced you that tech prep must be marketed aggressively. Now turn your attention to the marketing plan.

A comprehensive marketing plan must present:

- the right message
- to the right people
- at the right time.

That's harder than it sounds. Developing a marketing plan that's right for your situation requires lots of time, thought and group input.

In the midst of working on articulation agreements and curriculum, you'll probably be tempted to plunge into marketing on a piece-meal basis – a news release here and a brochure there – assuming that more detailed planning can come later.

Don't do it. You can only get people's attention for the first time once, and you must make sure you create the best first impression possible. This requires coordinated materials, optimum timing and – most important – a powerful message that, while tailored to fit various audiences, includes the same key points each time it's presented.

That message must be persuasive. In her doctoral dissertation on tech prep, Cassy Key quotes Earl Newsom's four principles of persuasion:

1. **Identification:** People have to be able to relate to an idea. They'll only do so if they see some direct effect on their own hopes, fears, desires or aspirations.

2. **Suggestion for action:** People will endorse ideas only if they are accompanied by proposed action from the sponsor of the idea or if the recipients themselves propose the action to be taken.

3. **Familiarity and trust:** People are unwilling to accept ideas from sources they don't trust, whether people or institutions. Therefore, keeping the audience's trust is important. Tell the truth.

4. **Clarity:** The "meaning" of a situation or event should be clear.

Of course, not everyone who reads or hears your message will be receptive. No one likes to receive information that contradicts what he or she "knows to be true." The "truth" for any individual is whatever he or she **perceives** it to be, whether or not this interpretation is factually accurate. For example, some people may "know" that voc ed is only for students who can't be successful in other settings or that a degree from a four-year college is always superior to one from a two-year institution.

Messages that contradict things we believe cause an uncomfortable feeling called cognitive dissonance. Consciously or unconsciously, we avoid this feeling whenever possible. For example, smokers are notoriously non-objective about data showing that smoking causes cancer. People are good at screening out, forgetting or just not accepting information that conflicts with their opinions.

At the same time, they're also good at remembering points that reinforce their beliefs. In the chapters that follow, you'll see many examples of practitioners gaining greater acceptance for tech prep by shaping their marketing messages to mesh with opinions people already hold.

Some "non-believers" will never change their minds. Those who eventually do will likely be brought around not by arguments and repetitive messages, but by the results produced by well-established tech prep programs. It's hard to argue with higher grades and standardized test scores, an amazing decrease in the number of high school dropouts, increased enrollment in postsecondary programs and high praise from employers.

It's important to remember that personal experience – or knowledge of the experiences of friends and relatives – will always outweigh messages from strangers in shaping opinions and perceptions. A newspaper article, a brochure or a presentation by an unfamiliar school administrator will not influence a parent nearly so much as having a child suc-

ceed in tech prep or hearing from the next-door neighbor that her previously uninspired son is flourishing in the program.

It's also important to remember that one bad personal experience can undo all the good messages and contacts that preceded it. Thus, marketing your tech prep program includes not only those elements that come to mind immediately – brochures, newsletters, presentations, etc. – but also personal contacts, how tech prep staffers answer the phone, the respect shown to students and parents and what school employees say about the program to people they meet in the grocery store. Teachers and support staff don't usually think of themselves as front-line marketers, but they are – on and off the job.

Unfortunately, people are more apt to share with others any negative feelings they have about a product or service rather than their positive impressions. Impress on everyone connected with your program – staff, students, parents and the business community – that spreading the good news about what tech prep has done for them can help increase public approval and contribute to increased funding and program expansion.

The Right People

The first step in planning your marketing campaign is to determine who your major audiences are. The primary ones you must address include:

- staff (secondary and postsecondary)
- business and industry
- parents
- students

There may be other audiences unique to your particular situation, and there will be subgroups of the primary audiences. For example, counselors are sometimes considered a separate audience because they play a key role in recruiting students for tech prep and because their interests and concerns are somewhat different from those of classroom teachers. Indeed, counselors merit their own chapter later in this book.

It's also vital to aim part of your marketing campaign at teachers in middle and junior high schools. Although they're not actively involved in tech prep, they must understand and support the program. Some districts go even fur-

ther, including elementary school teachers in their marketing efforts. These teachers, who may help start laying the groundwork for career decisions, need to be aware of the options that will be open to their students in the future.

Any marketing campaign must start with two audiences: school staff members and members of business and industry. These people must be addressed first because they'll take leadership roles in designing the tech prep program. To obtain the commitment you need from them, use your "what's in it for me" message to pique their interest and enthusiasm. Even practitioners who believe you must have something concrete before you begin advertising make an exception for these key players.

No matter how important counselors and teachers are in guiding students into tech prep, parents are – and should be – a major influence in their child's decision making. They must be convinced that tech prep is better than – not just as good as – other educational options. Since most parents "know" that a four-year degree is the key to success, happiness and all other good things for their child, convincing them takes ingenuity, patience and persistence.

Of all the major audiences, students are the most important. After all, they're the ones tech prep is designed to benefit. Besides, if they don't enroll, you'll give a party and no one will come. Fortunately, in many ways students are the easiest audience you'll face. Despite their parents' dreams, they may have a clue that the university isn't for them. They may never admit it, but many of them know they're doing just enough to get by in school and that if motivated, they could accomplish a lot more. Like everyone else, they'd like to feel proud of themselves, but so far it hasn't seemed worth the effort. Tech prep, presented in the right way by someone they respect, has tremendous appeal to this "forgotten majority" – and to other students as well.

The Right Message

Marketing involves providing information that will cause people to have positive feelings about a product and, if appropriate, to "buy" it. The goals in marketing tech prep are to gain widespread approval for it and to encourage personal participation by the primary audiences.

All marketing messages must explain tech prep's benefits. There are benefits that appeal directly to the primary interest of business and industry: profits. There are benefits that promote the major goal of educators: the success of students. There are benefits that, once some misguided percep-

tions are overcome, can fulfill the dream of parents: a bright future for their child. And there are benefits that attract and hold the attention of young people: an education that makes sense now and that will enable them to earn good money in the future.

"The benefits message is defined by the needs of the stakeholders," says Marie Coon, tech prep director for South Seattle Community College. "For business, tech prep means better prepared workers and less need for retraining. For educators, it means new stimulus in teaching methods, including collaborating with other teachers, and a decrease in the amount of remediation needed from one level to the next. For parents, tech prep means their child is motivated to stay in school and it gives parents an opportunity to learn about changing needs in the workplace. For students, tech prep means a non-duplicative education that has relevance to their future world of work."

Chapter 1 described tech prep's multiplicity of strengths. The next section of this chapter will help you translate those strengths into six broad benefits that can serve as the cornerstones of your marketing campaign. And Chapter 3 will explain how to target the benefits at specific audiences – including staff, business and industry, parents and students – so you can answer the key question: "What's in it for me?"

It's a refocusing of education – doing things to help kids be successful in the 21st century.

—Lyndon Hagestuen, project coordinator for the East Central Tech Prep Consortium in Minnesota

The Six Key Benefits of Tech Prep

1. Tech Prep Promotes Learning With a Purpose. Some practitioners call tech prep a road map for students, others call it seamless education and others call it a career path. Lyndon Hagestuen, project coordinator for the East Central Tech Prep Consortium in Minnesota, says all those descriptions are appropriate. "It's a refocusing of education – doing things to help kids be successful in the 21st century," he says. "They are excited about learning, they want to learn, they have a reason to learn."

Students involved in tech prep **know** there's a reason for what they're learning. With the help of teachers and counselors, they and their parents have mapped out a clear path toward a goal that's at least four years away. They know what courses they need to take to reach their goal, and they know when they will take them. They can see a direct relationship between each course and the career they have chosen. Business and industry people have visited their classes to tell them what it takes to be successful on the job, and field trips, summer internships and job shadowing have given them first-hand knowledge of how they'll use what they're learning. Because they have a clear picture of what

they'll be doing as adults and are experiencing success in preparing for that work, students have more confidence in themselves and an optimistic outlook for the future.

As students discuss careers over a period of years and learn about both job requirements and their own talents, they develop more confidence in their ability to choose a field that suits them and to do well in it. "We spend a lot of time talking about self-esteem, because we found that kids tended to choose jobs they thought **other** people would approve of," says Bettyann Battist, tech prep project director for Northcentral Technical College in Wausau, Wisconsin.

Olczak, who was principal at Chopticon High School before becoming director of the St. Mary's County Technical Center in Maryland, says tech prep has caused many changes in learning: "The agenda of the '60s and '70s was to provide all sorts of options, assuming that students would inherently make the right choices about careers," he says. "But kids, like water, seek the path of least resistance. They wandered through high school unmotivated and unfocused, taking whatever minimum competency courses were necessary and exiting with no real skills.

"We are trying to focus kids on career outcomes," he continues. "We start talking about career plans in elementary school, focusing on general aptitudes, interests and abilities. We give them job shadowing and lots of career information, so when they get to high school they are ready to focus on a career cluster. In high school, all kids take algebra and geometry. It's required. All kids take a technology course and three lab sciences. There are no general courses, because there is no general world."

One key step was eliminating "Mickey Mouse" courses, according to Olczak. "I've got data that knocks people out," he says. "Our SAT scores in math have gone up 50 points in four years. We don't offer run-of-the-mill math. The three-year sequence begins with algebra. Grades are up. Graduation rates are up. Attendance is the highest in the history of the school. It makes sense. If kids see relevancy between what they do in school and the real world, they're more likely to come and more likely to stay. But the kids who come to school and go from one class to another with nothing making sense, after a while, hey, they stop coming.

"If kids have a choice between college prep and easy classes, many will take the easy way out so they can party on the weekend, get a job, pay their car insurance, stay eligible for sports and do everything possible except get what they should be going to school for. We have to turn them around

and refocus them. We expect kids to produce a lot. We tell them they' re going to have to work, and they say, 'Good. That' s what we want.'"

Another strong motivator for tech prep students is the fact that many of their high school classes will earn them advanced standing at the local community or technical college, saving them both time and money. For some, it means an opportunity to complete college and enter the workforce in less than two years. Others stay the full two years and use the extra time to take additional courses.

George Buntzen, tech prep director for the Sussex County 2+2 Tech Prep Consortium in Newton, New Jersey, says that earning college credit in high school really appeals to students. "Competency-based instruction and increased skills in math, communications and science are positive by-products of what they see as their main goal – advanced college credit," he says.

2. Tech Prep Integrates Education. Tech prep refocuses education on career outcomes. Academic and vocational courses are integrated to give students a mix of book learning and hands-on experiences that allows them to apply what they learn to the real world.

"The big benefit of tech prep is contextual learning – taking academic content and connecting it to reality," says Olczak. "In many academic arenas we deal in the theoretical and the abstract, and it just doesn't connect for a lot of kids. We know from research that this is not how most people learn – they learn by doing – but that's not how we teach. We teach by theory, in the abstract, and expect kids to make the connection sometime later. Most kids either aren't able to do that at this time or academically aren't geared to make these kinds of connections because we teach in such a sterile environment that they don't relate it to the real world.

"The best example is mathematics," he continues. "We have done about everything we can do academically to kill mathematics as an art form, and it truly **is** an art form for the 21st century. This is the language that will connect us to a high-tech work environment and give us the standard of living and quality of life we want. Yet in education we take mathematics and make it such a dry, dull memorization of formulas that the average kid is very much turned off. We need to connect it to its applications, make it a gateway course to a high-tech career, use real life examples and manipulatives. We need to teach it in a relevant way so kids say, 'Oh, yeah, **that's** why I need to learn math!'"

Jack Miller, dean of professional technical development for the Mt. Hood Community College District in Oregon, reports that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – perhaps taking its cue from the tech prep movement – is recommending that curricula be changed to emphasize practical mathematics. "I think tech prep will become a significant reform movement for all of education," he says.

Some believe that the greatest benefit of tech prep, at least for the instructional staff, is the interaction it creates among various disciplines in a school and between staff members at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Miller has seen the value of this interaction in his district. "The most valuable, yet the most understated, outcome of tech prep is the cooperative relationship that has developed between secondary educators and community college people, both instructors and administrators," he says. "In the beginning there was not a great deal of trust, but tech prep brought them together to talk about education issues in a most productive way. This was especially true at the secondary level, where teachers in one high school had rarely talked to their counterparts in neighboring districts. As they worked together to develop articulation agreements and share curricula, other benefits developed. They began to buy equipment that was consistent throughout the district and change curricula so they were all teaching the same thing."

Cassy Key, director of the Capital Area Tech-Prep Consortium in Austin, Texas, also values the interaction created by tech prep. "Tech prep's a whole lot more than curriculum," she says. "It shows people how to work together in new ways to accomplish their goals. Tech prep is a community-building enterprise."

As high schools and community colleges enter into cooperative working agreements, students have many opportunities to meet college staff members and become familiar with the campus before they enroll. These opportunities increase both their interest and their confidence in being able to do college-level work. Thus, more may go to college – and more may stay until they graduate.

Tech prep also gets students to look at different **kinds** of colleges, according to Ann Gaulin, tech prep coordinator for Three Rivers Community-Technical College in Norwich, Connecticut. "Many think four-year colleges are all there are and don't even consider community or technical colleges," she says. "We invite high school students to spend time on our campus, which helps ease their insecurity in starting college. Tech prep gives them a head start and a focus toward something."

3. Tech Prep Reaches the Neglected Majority. Tech prep offers new hope to students who don't do well in traditional classes. They are Parnell's neglected majority – the ones who graduate from high school or even college without the skills to obtain an entry-level job or the flexibility to retrain as the job market's requirements change. They are the students in general-track high school programs who Dan Hull, president/CEO of the Center for Occupational Research and Development, says may not lose very much if they drop out before graduation. They are the kids our schools have ignored for years while concentrating on what we best understand: preparing students for college. The "others," it has been assumed, would somehow take care of themselves.

Educators know better, of course. Anyone who has even a nodding acquaintance with learning styles realizes that only a small percentage of people learn best with a primarily theroretical approach. But before tech prep, there was no concentrated effort to adopt the sweeping changes needed to make the educational system relevant to most students.

"We are reaching out to kids who have not previously had the kind of academic success that builds self-esteem," says Darlene Yoseloff, coordinator of the Middlesex Tech Prep Initiative in New Jersey. "We tell them, 'You can be successful in tech prep. We know you have talents and interests, but you may not have discovered what they are yet. This will give you an opportunity to explore career options.' We stress tech prep's link to the real world, because many are totally turned off with traditional academics."

In Judy Marmaras' statewide tech prep program in Rhode Island, the target population for tech prep is 50 percent of the total high school enrollment. "The average students in a comprehensive high school are very unsure about what they want to do when they get out," she says. "Many of them are trying to take the easy way out. Tech prep is also for students in vocational schools who have made some job decisions, but need academics to go along with their skill areas."

Betty Musgrave, director of tech prep for the Franklin County Schools in Illinois, classifies students between the 40th and 60th percentiles as potential tech prep kids. "If students are in that range and low in math and science, we try to put them in applied classes," she says.

While tech prep is undoubtedly most helpful to students who cannot reach their potential in a traditional academic environment, many believe that tech prep can benefit almost every teenager. "Tech prep targets the students who

have been overlooked before," says Larry McClure, director of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon, "but we all know that students of **all** types and abilities are well served by tech prep."

Walter agrees with McClure that tech prep isn't just for the neglected majority. "It's possible to target a certain segment of the population and still make it open and available to all students," she says. "That's why marketing of outcomes and careers is so important. We don't market it as the way to get into technical college, but as preparation for technology careers. Really, we are targeting students interested in mid-level careers. A student in the top 10 percent of the class, heading for an engineering technology career, is a tech prep student."

Paul O'Brien, tech prep coordinator at Indian River Community College in Florida, says his program targets all students who aren't university-bound. "We believe tech prep has appeal for **all** students," O'Brien says. "Fifty percent can go into it and succeed immediately. We work hard to bring others up to grade level by eleventh grade."

O'Brien reports spectacular success with academically disadvantaged students. "We took 100 of the most at-risk ninth graders and involved them in esteem-, confidence- and image-building activities generally used with corporate employees and professional athletes," he says. "Ninety of the 100 came up to grade level academically, and we've been picked as a national pilot site to continue the program."

Gaulin also views the entire school population as possible tech prep students. "We target the middle population," she says, "but many parents have come to me and said that, while their children are capable of going to a four-year college, they prefer that they start with a two-year school because of a shortage of money, a lack of motivation or some other reason."

Olczak targets every student in his school for tech prep recruiting. "In my school, all kids are tech prep kids," he says. "Parnell's motivation was to deal with the neglected majority. I agree with the premise, but in the environment of public education we need to address all students' preparation for the world of work. In our tech prep program we have a career pathway for college-prep kids. They are a cluster.

"We maintain that special population students are going to need workforce skills like everyone else, so they are tech prep kids, too, but maybe not at the same level," he adds. "Our definition of tech prep is to prepare kids to enter the

world of work, and this includes everyone. It's a much broader definition than just the neglected majority."

Adler, too, works with large numbers of high-risk students who don't fit the traditional tech prep definition. "We go far beyond the 50 percent of students in the middle," she says. "Perkins says serve all, and we work with a tremendous number of high-risk students who don't fit the mold. We have had students go on to Stanford and become medical doctors who would not have fit Parnell's model for admission. We've had kids come in with GPAs below 1.0 – very high risk. We serve many students with disabilities. We work with them and don't look at a narrow definition, or we would short-circuit the usefulness of tech prep."

Tech prep works for the middle-of-the-class students, the "neglected majority" who previously drifted in as freshmen and out as seniors without picking up much to prepare them for life after high school. It also works for those in the traditional college prep track, who in many schools are benefiting from the advantages of applied academics.

We have had students go on to Stanford and become medical doctors...We've had kids come in with GPAs below 1.0.

—Laurel Adler, project director, Los Angeles Area Tech Prep Consortium

4. Tech Prep Gives Students Skills That Employers Need. "American business is at risk, suffering from a rising tide of mediocrity in its most valuable asset: human capital." So proclaimed the National Alliance of Business and the Institute for Educational Leadership in a 1989 booklet titled *America's Leaders Speak Out on Business-Education Partnerships.*

Managers and personnel officers frequently find that young workers "are woefully unprepared to meet on-the-job challenges and to adapt quickly to the changing workplace needs of a post-industrial, knowledge-based economy," according to the booklet. "Nowhere is the problem more acute than at the entry level. As the 'baby bust' generation comes of age, the overall number of youths entering the job market has been declining, and the pool of applicants increasingly comprises high school dropouts, ill-prepared high school graduates and immigrants unfamiliar with American language and culture.

"But the problem is not limited to the disadvantaged," the booklet continues. "Increasingly, American businesses are finding that today's 'average' student is far below par." It quotes Denis P. Doyle, a senior research fellow at the Hudson Institute, who was prompted by the seriousness of the decline in the workforce to ask employers, "Imagine what it would be like to have 18-year-olds knocking on your door who are fully, broadly and deeply educated. Youngsters who can read, who can write, who can talk, who can think, who

can communicate and who can give instructions and receive instructions both orally and verbally. Youngsters who can read complex drawings and . . . who, most importantly, are prepared to continue learning in their adult life."

According to the booklet, Doyle's words describing the ideal worker "could also be used to help define the noble mission of a democratized public education system, one in which America has placed great stock. But in too many cities, and in too many schoolhouses, that mission has eroded into a quixotic goal."

These paragraphs succinctly summarize why cutting-edge educators and business alike have welcomed tech prep with open arms. And Doyle's description of the ideal new employee is right on target – except for the age – with the kind of workers coming out of tech prep programs. They have strong technical and academic skills and have been trained to communicate, to think, to solve problems, to work in teams and – most importantly – to adapt to changing requirements on the job. Quite likely, they have spent time in the workplace, so they know what is expected of them. They have learned how to learn.

Had the booklet's author known where to look in 1989, he would have found several tech prep programs (or their 2+2 forerunners) turning out just the sort of graduates Doyle described. Today, he would find excellent examples of these programs in almost every state, with more being started every year. Many of them – at least many of the pre-Perkins programs – owe their existence to an insistent nudge from business and industry.

Stogner's program in North Carolina is one of these. "The most convincing argument for school people in our area was that business and industry said the graduates coming out of our general curriculum and typical vocational education programs were not promotable people," she says. "This is not the message educators want to hear. The workplace has changed, and kids can no longer survive unless we change the skills they're taking to the workplace. Today's production line worker has to have good thinking skills and be able to make decisions. If a student does not want the courses that are recommended, the parents must sign a waiver. Most educators think lower-ability kids can't learn. They **can** and **will** if we raise our expectations and work hard with them."

Walter says that tech prep offers a pipeline of better educated students – academically, technically and attitudinally. "The target population is often a group of students who are

going to remain in the immediate area, so their training has a direct impact on local employers," she says. "They will be the future workforce of the community."

Kay Baker, tech prep coordinator for the Arkansas Department of Education, says employers benefit because students leave school with a skill. "The smart kids always picked up things, but the neglected majority, who may be just as capable, have not been guided to apply what they learned. Now that they take related programs of study, they are prepared to do a job.

"Every student takes workplace readiness. We used to try to provide this information in various classes; some students got it, and some didn't. Now we combine it in one course – how to keep a job and advance, deal with peers, etc."

Since tech prep students have been assessed and guided for several years prior to graduation, "they don't have to stumble around the workplace for ten years, trying to find their niche," says Carla High, project director for the Consortium to Restructure Education through Academic and Technical Excellence (CREATE) in Oklahoma. Tech prep graduates arrive on the job ready to go. As McClure says, "They don't have to be retrained, just fine-tuned."

Another advantage is that business and industry members of the tech prep consortium can see students in the workplace. "Tech prep involvement gives employers some say about the kind of employee they're getting," says Hagestuen. "For so many years we've been complaining about one another. Now we have a communication system set up. Next year, we will have community-based learning. Students will be involved with a sort of mentoring, working in several different settings. Employers will get to see students and keep in contact with them. They will get to know the students, become familiar with their work records and have more influence in creating the kind of employees they need."

Sometimes pre-graduation work takes a novel turn. "We have had great success with intern programs in CAD and travel/tourism," says O'Brien. "The employers send assignments for juniors and seniors in a rural community to complete for them at school. The instructors become more like bosses, stressing employability skills, punctuality, following through with a job and cooperative learning groups, and the employer pays students for the work they do. We hope this will snowball, since we'd like to have all our training at school sites, but it's hard to accomplish with some jobs." In this case, too, employers have the opportunity to become familiar with the work of potential full-time employees.

The wide spectrum of benefits coming to fruition in the workplace is attributable to one fact: educators and business people are **finally** talking with one another.

5. Tech Prep Involves Employers in Curriculum Development. A major reason why tech prep graduates are so well suited to the needs of today's employers is that business and industry are playing a strong role in shaping their educational experiences – not only at the worksite, but also in the classroom. The days are over when a school's "partnership" with business involved soliciting an ad for a sports program or asking representatives to sit on an advisory council that rarely met and whose advice was seldom taken.

Educators have finally realized that their business is to prepare students for jobs and, if they are to do it effectively, they must ask businessmen what those jobs will be and what skills workers will need.

Business and industry are represented from day one on tech prep planning committees. They work with educators to develop the curriculum, and in some cases they go into the classroom to help teach that curriculum. They sponsor co-op programs, mentoring, job shadowing and internships for both teachers and students. As one practitioner put it, "Employers are almost writing the specs for future employees."

Everyone benefits from this cooperative effort. Educators know they're giving students the preparation they need for jobs that will be available when they graduate. Students have a secure future to look forward to. And employers can anticipate a supply of workers who meet their requirements.

"We on the academic side are poorly equipped to define workplace competencies and expectations," Olczak says. "We understand the abstract, because we were taught that way. Unfortunately, a lot of kids don't relate to this. If we're going to connect our curriculum and make sense of applying it, then we need to include business and industry in the process of defining curriculum, because that's the environment our graduates will go to.

"If employers in my community have certain standards, it's up to them to work with the school and to help us develop curriculum or materials or methodology to deliver the kind of skilled workers they need," he adds. "Until we have partnership and communication, this will not happen; the comprehensive high school will go on turning out 'three Rs' kids. Those competencies don't even get you in the door today. For a real job, you need to have high-order thinking skills: problem solving, critical analysis."

Once employers understand they need to be part of the solution, Olczak says, they buy in right away. "It is in their best interest to do so," he says. "We literally make them equal partners, in and out of the schools. They visit programs and talk with teachers and kids. Students participate in on-the-job training and apprenticeships. Juniors and seniors go out on co-op programs in all sorts of career areas directly related to their fields of study. This gives employers a view of their potential workforce, so they can screen and pick who they want when they finish school. This is an agenda for the future of our young people and our nation. Business understands this connection. They understand the need for a real partnership with the school that involves defining jobs and job market skills so we can better prepare kids to meet the needs of business."

The Middlesex Tech Prep Initiative slightly changed its approach with business and industry in the program's second year. "The first year we had employers on all the planning committees, but we found this was too much of a commitment for them," Yoseloff says. "They didn't have the patience or the time for nitty-gritty curriculum work. The second year we used roundtable sessions that brought together business and implementation committee people with a set agenda of questions to generate discussion. We'll expand this process in 1993-94, with five employers from a variety of fields for each roundtable. Keeping the groups small encourages everyone to speak."

Julia Nichols, system director for Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois, agrees that business people do not have time to waste. "You must have something meaningful for them to do," she says. "Too many of them have served on advisory committees or fact-finding groups where nothing ever happened. They don't want to just give lip service anymore; they want the economic and education systems to change together, and we must have their involvement from day one."

Following are more examples of how tech prep programs work closely with business and industry in curriculum development and other areas:

- In South Carolina, Walter's group works with employers to develop special curriculum modules showing applications of academic content at local companies. These are available to teachers to use as supplemental materials in applied academics or vocational classes.
- Musgrave invites panels of employers to tell teachers what technical and employability skills are needed in

each occupation. She produces both videos and print scripts of these sessions for future reference.

- The Genesee Region Tech Prep Consortium in New York has a business/education council in each of the three counties it serves. "In the beginning, the councils identified higher academic skills and work skills as a priority for the project," says Linnea LoPresti, the consortium's director. "Then they developed a list of skills every worker needs, which we have incorporated into our curriculum. By coming into the process early, business people are partners in its development and continue to be involved.

  "When a school needs assistance from business and industry, they refer to the Business Resource Manual the project staff developed after surveying businesses and agencies in the three-county area," LoPresti says. It lists their resources, such as speakers, videos, job shadowing/intern opportunities, tours and scholarships. Schools contact the businesses directly to tap into resources needed.

A small rural district has five huge corporations as partners and all these employers have an active voice in what goes on.

—Cassy Key, director of Capitol Area Tech Prep Consortium, Austin, Texas

- High's Oklahoma program receives constant input from business representatives. "All our curricula are approved by and objectives are designed around business and industry," she says. "With tech prep, we have added partnerships which include guest speakers, internships, mentors and summer employment. We are working on postsecondary incentives which may include employment throughout school years and tuition reimbursement."

- Schools in Key's Texas consortium have received wonderful support from industry. "A small rural district has five huge corporations as partners," she says, "and all these employers have an active voice in what goes on. A Stakeholders Group meets once a month and has netted many financial resources and assistance in setting up tech prep programs. For example, Lexington Independent School District is now one of the Commissioner's Partnership Schools, is a Southern Regional Education Board 'High Schools That Work' pilot site and has received some additional grant monies.

- In Los Angeles, Adler says that many of the business people on her advisory committees go beyond curriculum writing to help teach job skills outlined in the training plan, then give suggestions for modifying the plan.

As these examples indicate, things have certainly come a long way since the days when educators would never have considered that "outsiders" might actually have ideas that could improve schools.

6. Tech Prep Focuses on High-Demand Careers of the Future. An obvious link exists between this benefit and the one involving employers and curriculum development.

"With the help of partners like Alcoa, Bluebonnet Electric Co-op, John Deere, Campbell Soup and GTE, our tiny Lexington ISD has set up programs in bio-technology, hydraulics/pneumatics and environmental energy technology," says Key of her Texas program. "Nearby districts will benefit, too. Twice a day, buses from three small rural districts will transport students to various tech prep learning sites, leveraging facilities, staff and tax dollars.

"Our consortium was the first in the nation to have a tech prep career pathway in wholesale/retail/international trade," Key adds. "We jumped on this in view of recent national free trade agreements, and Austin Community College will offer the degree. We also have an intergenerational program which fuses child care, elder care and health care. The associate's degree is designed to link up with a university program in elementary, special and bilingual education. Each of our tech prep career paths is designed with a 'career-ladder concept' so students can go as far as a PhD if they choose – but our first goal is to make sure they can get jobs after high school."

Business partners in Adler's California program helped write the curriculum. "This is a tremendous advantage," she says, "because they are almost writing the specs for future employees. They are writing instruction to relate to real jobs, not just at the entry level, but for career ladders, too. Business is helping us construct an educational program to prepare people for jobs they will have open. This is what we all want to do – not train for jobs that aren't there. Tech prep prepares students to be able to move up in the world, to go further in education and to get better jobs."

In Maryland, consortium director Mary Byrski shares an office with the director of the Regional Technology Council, who also sits on the tech prep consortium steering committee as an ex officio member. "Our consortium works very closely with his group to keep up with what's going on in high tech areas," Byrski says. "The council is doing a lot to bring high tech industry into southern Maryland. We take this information to the schools and say, 'We need to be doing something with this, because it's coming.' Two of our

steering committee members sit on the Private Industry Council and keep us up to date on what's happening there."

As an example of the interaction that's occurring, Byrski's group brought in health care providers for a two-day workshop to tell educators what careers and the labor market will be like in the future and what schools should be doing to meet the need.

Tech prep's emphasis on preparing for tomorrow's jobs also helps motiviate students, according to Holm. "We tell them they are not preparing for a dead-end job, but will have the ability to be trained and retrained, to be able to grow in the profession they choose or to change careers if their first job changes dramatically or becomes obsolete," Holm says. They need strong math, science and communications skills for the high-level jobs that are interesting, challenging and offer a good salary and the opportunity to advance."

In the past, educators, business representatives and students often blamed one another for workforce problems. With tech prep, they've finally learned they must share the responsibility of preparing tomorrow's workforce.

The Right Time

The six key benefits outlined above must be marketed at the right time. What's the right time? When the audience needs the information and can act on it.

Begin with the nucleus of employers, educators, parents and others who are the core of your planning committee. As your program progresses, additional committees will be formed and more people invited to get involved and be informed.

Remember that as the number of knowledgeable participants increases, you're also building the "sales team" that can speak about tech prep when you're ready to expand the marketing effort to a wider audience. Those who help to create a program develop a sense of pride and personal ownership that makes them invaluable spokespersons.

This is another reason for having different categories of people on planning committees – parents will be prepared to talk with other parents, teachers with teachers. All of us listen best to our peers – they're the people we're the most comfortable with.

As the basic framework for the tech prep program takes shape and you start working on curriculum and articulation agreements, get the word out to more people – especially

educators and employers – and encourage them to become involved. Provide lots of opportunities for these people to learn about tech prep and to buy into the program.

Don't overlook a basic tenet of public relations: tell your own people what's going on before you tell the rest of the community. It's common courtesy and common sense to let the school staff know about tech prep before they hear about it from an "outsider." Several practitioners report that hard feelings could have been avoided if they'd taken the time to inform inside audiences before presenting the program to others.

Don't force reluctant teachers to participate. You'll have better luck working with those who are excited about tech prep and letting their successes convince their colleagues it's the thing to do.

Some practitioners with outstanding programs have started full-blown marketing campaigns directed at parents well before their programs were ready for students. As noted in Chapter 1, they believe the excitement this creates puts pressure on schools to become part of the blossoming program. Others feel this kind of marketing is premature and does more harm than good. Both sides have good points. This will have to be a judgment call based on your individual situation.

Once programs are in place, it's time to pull out all the stops to win the support of parents and students. After you've created a favorable first impression, marketing efforts need to be consistent. Everyone must sing from the same hymn book.

In addition, the messages must be repeated often. "Given the 2,000 media messages people receive in a day, the message sent only once gets no notice," said Deede Sharpe, president of the Sharpe Company Inc., a marketing firm in Winter Park, Florida, in an article in the *Vocational Education Journal*. "You need to repeat your message . . . three to ten times per month before it is received."

But no matter how hard you try with your marketing campaign, everything will not be perfect. A news release you think is crystal clear will be misinterpreted. A disgruntled parent or staff member will say unpleasant things, loudly and in public. The printer won't have the brochures ready for an important meeting. Such is life. Just make sure that when things go wrong it's despite your best efforts – not because you began marketing before you were well acquainted with your product and your audiences.

Chapter 3

Targeting Your Benefits Message

"education

mama got out and fussed
real good 'bout the schools
cause i'm in the eighth
grade and she wants me to continue
but she says she needs to be
sure i don't become
just another high
school student"

—Nikki Giovanni
Poet

"We are the most learned society in the history of the world, but we are not a nation of learners. We have found ourselves here in 1993 well equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists"

—Steve Olczak
Tech Prep Administrator, Maryland

We're willing to bet Nikki Giovanni benefited because her mother took an interest in her education. And we **know** that thousands of kids in St. Mary's County, Maryland, benefit because of Olczak's epiphany regarding tech prep. Before becoming principal/supervisor of career technology education at St. Mary's County Technical Center in Maryland, Olczak spent five years as principal of nearby Chopticon High School. He didn't mention the story that follows in his interview for this book. It was related by Mary Byrski, director of the consortium that includes St. Mary's County.

After hearing Myrtle Stogner speak about the dramatic changes tech prep brought in Richmond County, North Carolina, Olczak said, "Well, that sounds good, but my school doesn't have the problems they have there." Nevertheless,

his curiosity was piqued enough that he collected data on what had become of his school's graduates of the past four years. He was not happy at what he discovered.

Soon afterward, Olczak went to a parents meeting and apologized. "I've been doing a disservice to you by allowing your kids to float through school," he said. "They must have more rigorous classes in math and science and communications and technology. I'm not here to debate this with you. I'm telling you: kids will not leave this school until they have a skill."

He installed a tech prep program at Chopticon High School. In time an amazing turnaround occurred. Attendance rose from 88 percent in the late 1980s to 94 percent in 1992-93. The dropout rate fell from 8 percent to 2 percent. Enrollment at the tech center jumped from 225 to 650. Five years ago, 20 percent of the high school students were taking college prep courses. Now 55 percent are enrolled in higher-level academic courses.

Chopticon's achievement is outstanding, but it's not unique or even unusual when people are committed to the belief that tech prep can almost guarantee success – in school and in the workforce – for most young people. An effective marketing program is the key to helping communities reach the necessary level of commitment.

The last chapter described the six key benefits of tech prep that can serve as the cornerstones of your marketing campaign. This chapter will explain how to target those benefits at specific audiences.

Messages with Appeal

Because people are most receptive to messages that meet a need or confirm an opinion they already hold, it's important to know who your audience members will be, how they feel about education and what their needs may be. You should obtain audience information before you begin preparing brochures, videos or oral presentations. You always need to answer the question: "What's in it for me?"

Because you target different audiences does **not**, of course, mean that you tell one thing to staff and the opposite to business leaders. The basic message – the ways in which tech prep will benefit everyone it touches – must remain the same. Consistency and truth are absolutely critical. You must ensure that everyone who speaks for the program understands and abides by this cardinal rule.

What can and should vary with the audience is the approach – that is, which benefits you stress to which audience. Teachers are most interested in classroom results. Parents want to know how tech prep will help their children be more successful in school and prepare them for good jobs. Students like to hear about the money they'll earn when they graduate.

So the right messages depend on whom you're talking to.

You can use the following targeted messages in your tech prep brochures, videos and other marketing materials.

The Right Messages for Staff

The following tech prep benefits are most likely to appeal to staff members:

- **Because all tech prep students develop four-year career plans, they know where they're headed.** They're more focused and inner-directed, and this is reflected in their behavior and academic performance. Although you may have to work harder initially to become familiar with a new curriculum and methodology, most teachers find that discipline and attendance problems decrease, achievement increases and teaching becomes more rewarding and a lot more interesting.

- **Tech prep includes applied courses in math, science and English that lead to success for students who have never been turned on by traditional teaching methods.** Students like the hands-on approach and the relevance they see between what they're doing in school and the career goal they've chosen. It's exciting for them and it will be exciting for you to see immediate, tangible results from your efforts.

- **Students can receive college credit for the courses you teach.** Not many high school teachers can boast of that. You'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're helping them get a head start on postsecondary education, saving them both time and money.

- **Cooperation between departments in the high school and between the secondary and postsecondary levels creates a new esprit de corps that's both challenging and exciting.** It will broaden your horizons, challenge your creativity, heighten your sense of professionalism and expand the human and material resources available to you and your students.

- **If you're a postsecondary teacher, you'll get students who are better prepared and ready to learn advanced skills and concepts.** They'll be more attentive and interested because they don't have to sit through a rerun of classes they took in high school.

- **Liaison with the business community will open new doors for you.** For starters, you'll get to see how what you teach relates to the work students will do after graduation. In addition, you may reap wonderful benefits from the employers who are your new tech prep partners – the chance for summer employment, job shadowing or mentoring for you or your students and guest speakers from business and industry. You may even get donated materials and equipment the school cannot afford.

- **Tech prep helps schools financially in other ways, too.** In most areas, state money for education is partially linked to student attendance. As attendance improves, so does state funding.

- **Even if there is no financial incentive, it will be a source of pride and satisfaction for you to see more students coming to school regularly, taking more rigorous courses, making better grades and higher scores on standardized tests, graduating and going on to college.** You'll know that you're providing something worthwhile for students who didn't get much out of high school in the past and who would never have considered college. As you help improve the quality of life for the next generation, you may be improving your own as well. That's because as student retention increases, so does your job security!

The Right Messages for Business

Businessmen are community residents and taxpayers, too, and thus interested in the economical operation of schools and the fact that tech prep graduates will be self-supporting and not a drain on the local economy. But at the office, not surprisingly, they are most interested in just **one** benefit of tech prep – the bottom line on the profit and loss chart.

These are the messages that will be most successful with them:

- **Business and industry will – probably for the first time – be full partners in the educational process.** Your advice on curriculum and other relevant topics will be sought – and heeded – on a continuing basis, beginning with the first stages of planning the tech prep pro-

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gram. You'll have many opportunities to share your insights and concerns with educators.

- **Business people will be welcome as observers or participants in the classroom.** In turn, teachers can accept invitations to visit your company to see what their students need to know to succeed in the workplace.
- **Through internships and other work-based programs, you can get to know prospective employees while they're still students.** You'll be able to observe them over a period of time, assess their potential and mold them to your specific needs.
- **Most important, tech prep graduates will enter the workplace with good technical and academic skills and an understanding of what you expect of them.** They also will have, as so many young people today do not, the other abilities that make a worker successful: the ability to work in teams, to think on their feet, to solve problems, to communicate and to adapt to change. Tech prep graduates have completed career plans that were developed at least four years earlier. They have demonstrated the ability to set a goal and work until they achieve it. They also should save you money, both because they require less initial training and because they're efficient and productive on the job.

The Right Messages for Parents

Most audiences readily respond to the benefits tech prep offers. Employers are quick to embrace anything that promises to improve the current training system for employees. Educators may be less willing than business people to admit there's something very wrong with education, but in their hearts they, too, realize how many teenagers are falling through the cracks. Students will be the first to admit school could be improved. All of these groups have good reasons for embracing tech prep. But with parents, there's a difficult hurdle to overcome.

Parents considering tech prep are on the horns of a dilemma. Above all, they want what's best for their child. In the past they've been led to believe that "best" is a synonym for "baccalaureate degree." Whether or not a four-year degree meshes with the reality of their child's academic performance or the fate of friends' children who have degrees but no jobs, they still hold fast to the dream. Their son or daughter **will** go to the university, get a fine job and live happily ever after. It takes a lot of persuading to change this perception and convince them they're not shirking their

duty and settling for second-best if they allow their ninth grader to enter a tech prep program.

The messages that are most effective with parents include:

- **You will be an integral part of the decision making process.** Counselors and other school staff members will help you and your child look at all the options based on the child's interests, aptitudes and abilities.
- **A long-range career plan will be developed, but it will not be set in concrete.** You and your child can request changes at any time. There are also options concerning exit points.
- **Tech prep incorporates applied courses in English, math and science that are wonderful for students who learn better with a hands-on approach.** Grades improve because students have a better understanding of what they're doing and because they see that it's going to be useful to them on the job. Because they have a goal to work toward, tech prep students are better focused. They have a purpose for going to school that causes them to try harder and to achieve more.
- **The tech prep curriculum is just as stringent – and sometimes more demanding – than college prep courses.** It includes every subject that college-bound students take. Students tackle difficult material, but it's presented in a way that's easier to understand. Teachers have very high expectations for tech prep students.
- **Tech prep students have better attendance in high school, are less apt to drop out, make better grades and higher test scores and are more apt than other students to continue their education after high school.**
- **Tech prep is a college-bound program.** Every tech prep student is expected to enroll in a two-year community or technical college and to earn a degree or certificate. Students who want to continue working toward a four-year degree will be well prepared to do so.
- **Your child can earn free college credit for some courses he or she takes in high school, thus saving both time and money at the postsecondary level.** Your child can apply the skills he or she learns in high school and community or technical college to help pay expenses for the next level of training. In addition, a number of states offer college scholarships specifically for tech prep students.

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- **Business and industry are big boosters of tech prep and have helped design the program.** Graduates will have the skills and knowledge employers are looking for, and good jobs will await them.

- **Eighty to ninety percent of jobs in the 21st century will require training after high school, but not necessarily a baccalaureate degree.**

- **Tech prep will prepare your son or daughter for the technology jobs of the future.** Along with academic and technical skills, he or she will learn the interpersonal and communication skills that are necessary to succeed at work. Most important, tech prep students learn to adapt to change, something that is imperative for job security. Through tech prep, your child will take the first step toward lifelong learning.

The Right Messages for Students

Students who have been well prepared during their middle school/junior high years should have a pretty good idea by the end of eighth grade where their interests and abilities lie. With the help of parents and school personnel, they're ready to select a probable career area and develop a related four-year educational plan.

The aspects of tech prep that most appeal to them aren't necessarily those that sway their parents. However, many educators report that young teenagers can make surprisingly mature decisions.

The tech prep benefits that most appeal to students include:

- **With tech prep, you can start preparing for the career of your choice while you're still in high school.** Over the next four to six years, you'll learn the academic and technical skills you need to get a good job. You'll also learn lots of other things, such as teamwork, decision making and how to adapt to change, that will make you valuable to your future employer.

- **With tech prep, you know where you're headed and what you have to do to get there.** You have a plan that can guarantee your success if you stick to it. While other kids are wondering what they'll do after high school, you will **know**.

- **The academic courses in the tech prep program are taught so that you use your hands as well as your head.** You'll learn difficult material, but you'll find it's

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much easier to understand because of the practical applications.

- **Tech prep students find that school becomes a lot more interesting and fun.** Their attendance improves, their grades and test scores go up and they're much less likely to drop out before graduation. If you haven't been too excited about school in the past, you'll be surprised how different it can be after you enroll in tech prep.

- **Tech prep is a college-bound program.** When you graduate from high school, you'll be halfway through and you'll have taken several courses for which you'll earn free college credit.

- **If you ever decide that you want to attend a four-year college, you'll be well prepared to do so.** The tech prep curriculum is just as rigorous as the college prep track, and the decisions you make while developing your four-year plan don't lock you into anything.

- **The employers who are the school's partners in the tech prep program offer opportunities for you to have worksite-based experiences while you're still in school.** In some cases you'll be paid. This is especially true during the last two years of your four-year program. The skills you learn in high school also should enable you to get a good part-time job to help with expenses for your postsecondary education.

- **At the end of four years, you'll have an associate's degree or a certificate from a community college or a technical college.** That degree or certificate will show that you have the skills and knowledge to qualify for a good job with a future.

- **Eighty to ninety percent of the jobs in the 21st century will require technical training after high school, but not necessarily a four-year college degree.**

- **Tech prep is the fastest way to become independent!** Two years after high school graduation, you'll be ready to work in a job with a good salary and the possibility of advancement.

These benefit messages – carefully targeted for specific audiences – should help propel your marketing campaign toward success. Each clearly answers the key question about tech prep: "What's in it for me?"

Chapter 4

Marketing Tech Prep to Other Educators

"The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its ideas will hold water."

—John Gardiner
Former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare

Every member of the school staff is important to tech prep's success. You must ensure that everyone from school board members to teachers to custodians feels included.

You should hold introductory sessions for members of the support staff, even though they aren't directly involved. Custodians, secretaries and cooks are sometimes more likely than teachers and administrators to live in the school district where they work, and they're the ones many people will turn to with questions about tech prep. Keeping them well informed is a good way to build community support. And besides, the support staff is part of the school family – it shows respect to let them know what's going on.

In this chapter we'll discuss marketing tech prep to administrators and teachers, but keep **all** staff members in mind as you read. (Counselors, who play a vital role as liaison with students and parents, will be discussed separately in Chapter 5.)

This chapter has one overriding message: Open the lines of communication. There must be strong communication between administrators and teachers, between academic and technical teachers, between secondary and postsecondary teachers, between teachers at different schools, and between educators and business and industry representatives.

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Many of these folks aren't used to talking with each other, so you have your work cut out. But if you can open the lines of communication, you're well on your way to creating a successful tech prep program.

Making Administrators Part of the Team

For tech prep to succeed, from the very beginning it must have strong and **visible** support from those at the top: the superintendent, the community college president and their boards. Over and over, practitioners stress the importance of this support. "The reason many places have problems getting tech prep started is that they don't have good leadership at the top," says Stogner. "We didn't just discover in 1986 that we had a lot of students in voc ed who didn't have good reading, math and science skills. But the difference at that point was that we had a superintendent, Douglas James, and a community college president, Joe Grimsley, who were willing to listen, to recognize the problem and to get in there together and do something about it."

These senior administrators are likely to be the easiest audience to persuade. That's because tech prep's "bottom line" – a decrease in the dropout rate and increases in attendance, test scores and college enrollment – will make their institutions look good. In most states, an improvement in attendance translates into more state funds for the district. Enhancing the schools' public image and increasing their revenue are powerful persuaders for change.

The men and women in top administrative and board positions often rub shoulders with employers through civic organizations and other community groups. This means that they – unlike many teachers – probably already have some idea of the problems employers are experiencing in finding young people who can function in the changing workplace.

Recognizing the benefits possible for both education and the business community if they join forces, many administrators will be eager to pursue a joint venture. Such an undertaking will appeal to their sense of community spirit. And hearing about the incentives business has provided to educational partners in other parts of the country certainly adds to tech prep's appeal.

There are, of course, stumbling blocks in the path to acceptance. The all-American dream of the four-year college degree has a powerful hold on administrators and board members. Often they measure a school's success by the number of graduates pursuing four-year degrees. Thus, some districts tout tech prep as "another way to go to college."

Protection of "turf" – an unwillingness of administrators to share information, resources and students – also may be a problem. It's hard for people used to having the last word to share planning and decision making with others, including their subordinates and – worse yet – non-educators. Yet for tech prep to work, the plan must be developed by those who use it every day in the classroom with a strong voice from business and industry.

For every superintendent or board member whose hang-ups about degrees or turf create obstacles, however, there are dozens who know in their hearts that their schools aren't working. Had they known how to "fix" the educational system, they would have done so long ago. They will welcome tech prep. The amazing results it produces in other districts will convince them it's the solution they've been looking for.

When marketing to administrators, don't forget those at the building level. "The principal is the key to getting teachers involved," says Marc Doss, project coordinator for the Heart of the Ozarks Tech Prep Consortium in Missouri. "If teachers trust him, have been through other change processes with him and believe something good will come from tech prep, they're willing to try it."

How to Get Administrators On Board

Give administrators every bit of information you can find about successful tech prep programs. At your first meeting with them, show one or more of the videos available from national tech prep groups or successful programs. If you can afford it, bring in a director from a strong program to talk with them. And prepare a position paper that outlines the major accomplishments of tech prep programs elsewhere and goals to be achieved in your district.

For an especially convincing approach, prepare a chart (with copies people can take home) that lines up your school's dropout and attendance rates, test scores, percentage of students in high-level math and science classes, with comparable "before" figures from a district with a successful tech prep program. Then show a second chart listing current data in these areas for the other district.

Another good approach is to take administrators and board members with you to a state or national tech prep conference. "The first time I went out of the district to a tech prep conference, I took along the community college president, the deputy superintendent, the president of the school board, counselors and teachers," says Jolene Highfill, tech prep coordinator for the Rogers Public School System in Ar-

kansas. "When you get all of them to buy in, you get **progress**."

Better yet, take key administrators to visit some of the programs that are producing outstanding results. Arrange for them to talk with program administrators, business and industry participants, teachers, counselors and students so they'll see how tech prep affects each group.

Once they're convinced and committed, it's vital that top administrators and board members attend every initial meeting with staff and community groups. It's important for people to see secondary and postsecondary leaders and business and industry representatives standing together and to hear them say – over and over – that they believe in tech prep and are prepared to make it work.

Keeping Administrators Informed and Supportive

You can't afford to let administrators' interest and backing wane once your program gets under way. After administrators have secured funding and helped rally the community around the program, they may feel their major tasks are done. Rid them of that notion. Keep them involved and interested with a steady stream of information about program successes, hands-on visits to classrooms, talks to community groups and opportunities for public recognition. The chiefs like a pat on the back, too.

But a word of warning. More than one practitioner says administrators have become so enthralled with tech prep and so eager to share their successes that they want to attend every conference and personally accept every speaking invitation, forgetting that teachers also need a turn in the spotlight. If administrators don't volunteer to share the glory, you might mention that including teachers would be good for morale. If hinting doesn't work, you might quietly urge conference planners to specifically ask that a teacher represent your program the next time they issue an invitation.

Another potential problem is that the administrator's desk may become a bottleneck for program information that needs to be passed along to classroom teachers and other staff. Newsletters, flyers about tech prep workshops and other general information should go directly to everyone involved with the program. If it's impractical to distribute materials to everyone, make sure the administrator who receives them understands the importance of sharing.

Making Teachers Part of the Team

As with every successful educational effort, it's the teachers and counselors who make tech prep work. "Although all the literature suggests that your support must come from the top down, I believe that simultaneous bottom-up support is very important," says Yoseloff. "We worked through groups like the New Jersey Business Teachers Association to create awareness and interest. People on the implementation committee suggested teachers in their districts who would be interested, and we started our program with the most enthusiastic ones. We used in-service workshops, presentations and field trips to schools already involved with tech prep. The trick is to get everyone working together when they're all used to doing things differently."

For tech prep to succeed, teachers must feel it's **their** program. "Bring teachers in and have them assume ownership," says Walter. "Tech prep isn't something already packaged you can take out and spoon feed to them. When you talk about an educational reform movement, you're talking about something that can only occur in the classroom and only when teachers own it. So you bring them together and give them a vision of what you're talking about and then give **them** time to talk about what it means to their respective areas and what they want to do about it."

When you talk about an educational reform movement, you're talking about something that can only occur in the classroom and only when teachers own it.

—Diana Walter, executive director of Partnership for Academic and Career Education in South Carolina

Larry Mello, coordinator of the East Valley Tech Prep Consortium near Phoenix, agrees. "We start every meeting by asking, 'What are your issues and concerns?' Teachers collaborate with one another, and 'the group becomes the expert.' They buy in because they're part of the process and it becomes their issue. There is great power in the team!"

How to Get Teachers on Board

Introductory and In-Service Meetings—Start with group meetings to introduce the concept of tech prep. If your budget allows, bring in a team of successful practitioners, take teachers to visit a program that's producing outstanding results and pay the expenses of teachers to attend state conferences on tech prep. At the very least, show some good videos that feature teachers and students talking about what tech prep has done for them.

Nadine Possehl, tech prep coordinator at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, uses small meetings to introduce tech prep so everyone feels comfortable asking questions. "Hearing hard-core facts about test scores, dropout rates and the like from someone like Myrtle Stogner convinces people that tech prep does what it promises," she says.

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With teachers, it's useful to emphasize that tech prep helps students achieve better, motivates them to enroll in more stringent academic courses, prepares them well for both postsecondary education and the workplace, and gives them greater purpose in school and a heightened sense of self-worth. Tech prep students are exactly the type of students that teachers love to teach.

One thing you **shouldn't** do is say, "You're doing a crummy job and tech prep is your salvation." You also need to reassure teachers that tech prep won't turn their world totally upside down. "The best thing we have done is tell teachers we're not going to destroy everything good we have done in education," Hagestuen says. "We tell people they have done well, but need to change things in a positive manner."

Georgia Grantham, assistant superintendent in Salida, Colorado, agrees. "Teachers may find the concept of tech prep very challenging," says Grantham. "But if we come on too strong, they may have fears about giving up what they are familiar with. We overcome their lack of understanding by getting them involved right away. They will see it requires a different style of teaching and strong bonding. As they see how well it works in tech prep, some strictly academic areas are adapting applied learning strategies for their own curriculums."

Some teachers feel threatened by tech prep, Olczak says. "Change is too overpowering for some teachers, who fear we're going to compromise the content and rigor of their courses for vocational competency," he says. There are teachers who say, "How can I give up teaching Chaucer to teach communications skills? Students need Chaucer!"

"But when educators realize that all kids really **can** learn, it is a revelation . . . They're fired up, kids are fired up, it's contagious. It's a nice way for veteran teachers to re-ignite their careers."

Be sympathetic to the fact that teachers are already overburdened and that starting a tech prep program will require lots of extra time. "Let teachers know you understand how many demands are placed on them," says Key. "I know some who get up in the morning and drive a school bus for extra income, go to school all day and do their job, and usually stay after school for extra activities. They take graduate classes in the summer and at night during the school year."

Teachers are more likely to support tech prep if it doesn't result in lots of additional work for them. "We don't ask teachers to do tech prep on the back of everything else

they've been doing," Walter says. "Consortium sites pay for subs during the school year and provide honorariums for their participation in summer meetings. We take away all the reasons they can't get together." In Valparaiso, Indiana, Cynthia Hicks also has found that providing subs increases teacher attendance at meetings. In fact, most of her consortium's money goes toward teacher training and sub pay.

Teachers also must be reassured that you'll be there to support them all along the way. Sally Mayse, coordinator of the Lowcountry Tech Prep Consortium in South Carolina, says "A big part of my job is seeing that teachers have the materials they need. So often they are in-serviced in new areas and then aren't provided with the backup they need to carry through. If they say they need books, I buy them. If they say they want to belong to an organization, I get them a membership. I try to use the funds I have available to support teachers as much as possible."

When selling tech prep to teachers, sometimes it helps to tackle one small group at a time. Carol Lowe, tech prep coordinator for a consortium of 16 school districts in eastern Idaho, used this approach. "I went to faculty meetings to talk about tech prep and met a great deal of resistance," Lowe says. "Because I had a background in English, I decided to work with English teachers first. It seemed to work better for us to concentrate on one discipline at a time with applied training, then bring them all together."

Surprisingly, practitioners commonly find that academic teachers – not technical teachers – are the most enthusiastic about tech prep. "We've had less resistance to tech prep from academic teachers than from vocational teachers," Baker says of her Arkansas program. "The academic teachers **knew** something was wrong with the old system. Once they found out they didn't have to leave out any of the content of their English course, for example, but just add a little bit to it to make it more exciting, they were convinced."

Not all practitioners report problems with vocational teachers, though. In Connecticut, Gaulin says, lots of technical teachers were aware things needed to change. "Sometimes teachers and administrators called me; I never had to recruit. One district **begged** to come into the consortium. It's necessary to gain teachers' trust of systems and staff. Everything I do, I give to everybody. Every time we make a decision, I ask everyone's opinion. It takes more time, but they feel like they belong."

Most teachers don't resist tech prep. "We didn't have to do a lot of selling: teachers were way ahead of us," says Jimmy Roberts, curriculum coordinator for the Central Texas Tech Prep Consortium. "They said, 'Well, it's about time. We have been looking for this for years!'"

Teachers know that high school isn't properly serving many students, says John Hunter, co-director of the Tulsa Tech Prep Team. "There is a sort of tacit agreement that 'you don't have to learn much and I don't have to teach much.' We show teachers there really **is** a way to reach students, even those not of the highest caliber. So many students are not reached by traditional teaching methods, and tech prep is a way to do it. We taught teachers and counselors about learning and teaching styles, about cooperative learning activities and what a classroom based on learning styles and applied methodologies looks like and sounds like. They learned these things in the same way students were to learn in their classes."

In some schools, integrating academics and technical areas isn't new. When teachers in Adler's Los Angeles program first heard about tech prep, they said, "But that's what we're already doing!" Adler believes a false division is sometimes created between academics and vocational education. "Even the fact that we say we need to integrate them indicates that we think they are different," she says. "When you look at what occurs in the classroom, you see a tremendous amount of integration going on already. Good teachers have always provided hands-on opportunities. Integration is not a new concept, and it shouldn't be introduced as something new that's brought in and imposed from the outside.

"Look at the areas where you already excel in integration and build on them," she says. "Demonstrate how students can learn more practical skills in academic classes. It's good reinforcement for your teachers to say, 'We can do this. We've been doing it all along.' There is a lot more ownership if you create your own curriculum and strategies, rather than shipping in a lot of books to tell teachers what to do."

Adler also suggests starting with teachers who are enthusiastic about tech prep. "Their success will be contagious," she says. "We began our program with people who were really gung ho, and they got lots of recognition for what they were doing. Another advantage of approaching it this way is that you learn and make mistakes with people who are patient and supportive, not with skeptics. Mistakes with them would reinforce their mistrust. As you progress, you can expand your internal marketing effort. Let teachers talk to other teachers. A couple of them can take a leadership role

and bring others along. Some will never want to be involved. Don't let this stop you."

Roanoke's Helmandollar agrees. "We begin with those who are excited and want to work with us and just ignore the resisters," he says. "We make tech prep available to everyone, encourage them with all available resources and celebrate their successes. It doesn't matter **who** does tech prep, it's only important that **someone** does it. The goals are so broad that we just work with the ones who seem to do it best. We're not developing something and delivering it from above. We have been very cautious about doing things that would alienate teachers who haven't bought in yet."

Promoting Interaction—As we said earlier, one of the keys to tech prep's success is strong communication among the various people involved. Thus, encouraging interaction among these people – many of whom may not have previously worked together – is critical.

Academic/Vocational—Academic and vocational teachers frequently work in different parts of the building. But in many schools, they might as well be working on different planets for all the interaction that occurs between them. Tech prep works to change that.

North Dakota Tech Prep conducts joint in-service meetings for vocational and academic teachers. "It's amazing what this has done to open doors," says Anita Decker, the project's director. "Many academic instructors were totally unaware what we were doing in applied academics, and we've been doing a great deal for the past five years. Now the academic teachers want to integrate it into their programs. When we opened our summer tech prep workshops to academic teachers, they began to see what was going on and were very open to sharing. We have done two statewide workshops with South Dakota and are collaborating in other ways as well.

"We are planning a conference with the theme, 'How do I take what I have and make it applied?'" Decker adds. "Teachers will work in teams to adapt and adjust materials. Even if tech prep shuts down in three years and there is no more money for the integration of academic and vocational technical education, teachers will have had experience with different learning styles and how they can adapt materials to match various styles."

Tech prep can help unite academic and vocational teachers, says Davis. "You may think you have a united group, but until you see vocational and academic teachers sharing

Tips from successful tech prep programs

- ☐ CREATE, headquartered at Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech Center in Oklahoma City, does extensive workshops with staff, including bi-monthly meetings for all tech prep teachers in the consortium. The meetings are held in different locations, and teachers are invited to share their ideas and materials.
- ☐ "The most compelling message we had for educators was that we had lost sight of what we were about," Stogner says. "The results of a statewide economic development study said we couldn't sit back in Richmond County and wait for some big companies to move in and save us – we had to raise the educational level of students and develop entrepreneurs."
- ☐ Highfill says she maintained a good rapport with teachers by continuing to teach two hours a day after she became vocational director. "They trusted me," she says. "I took every available opportunity to in-service every teacher and central office staff member. We invited other nearby districts to send teachers to hear national speakers we brought in, even though they were not part of the consortium. There's never a high school faculty meeting where tech prep is not mentioned. Good solid in-service up front with speakers who can back up what they say with experience and statistics really pays off. Teachers are beginning to think this is not just another thing that will pass."

rides to conferences and rooming together, you don't **know** it's happening," she says. "It probably takes two to four years to make true tech prep believers out of people, because there's a waiting period – a delayed effect – before the rewards are visible."

Of course, students reap the biggest benefits from academic and vocational teachers working together. "For example, the T & I people said their students needed to upgrade their language arts skills," says La Donne Walker, former instructional supervisor for the Marshall County School District in Kentucky. "English teachers prepared a series of modules, the T & I instructors selected the ones they thought their students could profit from, and teachers from the two disciplines taught them together. The English teachers took the students to the computer lab and helped them prepare nice-looking resumes. The students were so proud!"

Secondary/Postsecondary—One of tech prep's greatest strengths is its integration of secondary and postsecondary education. To make this integration work, you must open the lines of communication between educators at the two levels so they can join together to build a strong, seamless program.

"It's easy for community college people to feel left out because so much of the preliminary work takes place at the high school," says Holm. In her Gainesville program, "To help ease this, we arranged a faculty exchange day, with high school teachers visiting the college. Interestingly, they said they got the most benefit from the time spent talking with teachers **not** in their own field. We mix academic and technical, secondary and postsecondary people in staff development meetings."

Meetings between teachers at different levels help secondary teachers learn what skills students need to succeed at the postsecondary level, says Wisconsin's Battist. "The technical college put together entry-level competencies for each course area, and we brought counterparts from the high school and college together to talk about them," she says. "Then the high school teachers figured out where the competencies were taught in their courses and we used this information to build career maps."

In New Jersey, Buntzen used similar meetings to match competencies, student outcomes and curricula to see if there were any redundancies between the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Tips from successful tech prep programs

- ☐ The statewide tech prep program in Rhode Island held general awareness conferences, and then compiled a list of people who wanted to participate in tech prep. Also used are newsletters and presentations in the schools to arouse interest. Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Education permitted production of three videos directed at students, parents and educators.
- ☐ "What we **didn't** do in the beginning was write a brochure," says Bettyann Battist, tech prep project director for Northcentral Technical College in Wausau, Wisconsin. "We brought people together for presentations and always asked for feedback on three questions: What are the positive things you think can come out of tech prep? What are the barriers you perceive? What are your additional questions? We do this after every meeting. We have learned that in-service is never over. I've heard many people say you have to get off of in-service and go on to curriculum, but in-service goes on and on."

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"We told them we hoped to eliminate redundancy and enable high school students to earn college credit, and they thought this was great," Buntzen said. "High school teachers visited the community college, and we got interaction going between them and the college faculty. It was a real boost for high school teachers to find out they are teaching college-level courses. They used this to promote their courses and took their students to visit relevant classes at the community college."

For high school teachers, visits to any technical colleges in the consortium are especially helpful, says Sally Mayse, coordinator of the Lowcountry Tech Prep Consortium in South Carolina. "We have taken entire faculties to the technical college," she says. "We do an overview of the postsecondary component and tour the school. Almost without exception, the high school teachers have never been on the campus of a technical college. This is especially true of guidance people. They just know absolutely nothing about it. The visits have proved to be a very effective technique."

District/District—Many tech prep programs require cooperation among various school districts, where turf problems occasionally occur. But the sharing of ideas across district lines can help strengthen programs.

"School people are not used to crossing district lines," says Southern Maryland's Byrski. "Most teachers don't have a problem with it – although administrators may – but no one has ever **done** it. Now most of our consortium's planning and development projects are coordinated throughout the tri-county so people can share their ideas and strengths."

Key says it's important to set up a "communication network" among districts. "Get the connections that make collaboration possible," she says. "These are smart, capable professionals. All they need is an environment ripe for synergy. That's what a tech prep consortium can be. Pretty soon, education's fun again, and everyone's got that sparkle in their spirit – including students."

Education/Business—Initially, educators and representatives of business and industry may be suspicious of each other. Many educators aren't keen on having outsiders "meddle" in their programs. And some business and industry representatives blame educators for turning out graduates who can't perform on the job.

Once you get them talking, though, teachers and business representatives can learn how to help each other. Perhaps most importantly, teachers can learn what skills students

will need when they enter the job market. After all, everybody shares the same goal: producing graduates who are ready to work and contribute to society.

"Teachers are pretty insulated from the real world, and we have to get them out to the workplace to show them why change is needed," says Nichols. "It isn't easy. Most of them are in graduate school in the summer, but another course doesn't fill the bill when what they need is to get out in the community and see what's happening. They've never been allowed to do this. We send huge numbers of people out to spend time in businesses in the summer, with staff development days in the afternoon. Our teacher institute days are no longer educators talking to educators; they have become more business/industry days."

Teachers are pretty insulated from the real world, and we have to get them out to the workplace to show them why change is needed.

—Julia Nichols, director of Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois

Helmandollar's tech prep program sent academic teachers, technical teachers and counselors out to businesses for a few days early in the program. "We paid for subs," he says. "When the people came back, they were so excited and enthused. Their talking about what they'd learned helped tech prep catch on."

In Seattle, Boeing offered summer jobs to teachers of math and principles of technology from several districts, Coon says. "It built good relationships between the two disciplines," she says, "and focused all the participants on how their curricula relate to technology in the workplace."

Sometimes, a simple one-day trip to a business can help open teachers' eyes. "We took 40 counselors, teachers and administrators to Bethlehem Steel, which is a big supporter of tech prep," says Indiana's Hicks. "They had people talk with our group about the sort of workers they hire and what their employment needs will be in the next ten years. Before this trip, many of the teachers said they didn't know what industry expected. We also brought a panel of business people to a staff workshop to talk about hiring/employment needs."

Teachers in the South Carolina consortium can get graduate credit for a course that sends them out into industry. The consortium pays the full cost of tuition and books for the course, which is called Educators in Industry. "They are absolutely thunderstruck in that course," says Mayse. "They have no idea what goes on in business and industry. This course has been very effective in bringing resistant teachers on board. After taking it, they say, 'Oh, **now** I get it!' Then they take additional training."

Keeping Teachers Informed and Supportive

Because tech prep is such a dynamic, evolving process, there's little opportunity for teachers to lose interest and enthusiasm. Still, it's good to give them incentives as the program progresses. Provide release time for regular consortium meetings where they can talk with peers about what's working and what's not. Let a different school host each session and present a program on its successes.

Provide opportunities for teachers to attend and speak at state and national meetings. It validates what they're doing to tell others about it. "We ask for a lot of hours of teachers' time," says Oklahoma's High. "To encourage their involvement, we try to include everyone at least once in teams making presentations to state and national groups."

Give teachers release time to establish contacts with their counterparts at other levels and with business and industry. In the past, teachers seldom had a chance to get out of the classroom during the day. Nichols' program provides time for teachers to work with others in their building and with business and industry. "We meet teachers on their own turf and treat them special," she says. "We provide subs, pay stipends, do whatever it takes to get their commitment."

Make sure teachers are equal partners by sharing with them all the information you have, by providing chances for feedback and by acting on their suggestions whenever you can. Issue a monthly newsletter to staff members with lots of pictures and success stories. Work with the media to promote tech prep to the community, too. This is a real morale boost for educators.

Byrski says her consortium is starting a newsletter because "too much of what we were sending out stayed on the administrator's desk. We're hiring a professional to coordinate the newsletter, but the three tech prep coordinators will pull together the ideas for articles. It's often hard to get teachers to see that much of what they do is newsworthy."

Tom Pierson suggests sending newsletters to everyone who is – or should be – interested. Pierson is chairman of the Central Upper Peninsula Vocational-Technical Education and Employment Coalition in Michigan. The coalition's newsletter goes to all middle school, secondary and college teachers in six counties. In addition, all school administrators and secondary and postsecondary board members receive it, as do 300 business and industry people.

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Most important, help teachers feel excited and proud about participating in a magnificent transformation of the educational system. No longer do teachers outside the college prep track have to feel they're somehow second class. Through tech prep, they're providing their students with something at least as good as, and quite possibly better than, college prep. It's a program Dan Hull describes in *Getting Started in Tech Prep* as "one they would want for their own kids."

If your budget permits, give teachers items that identify them as part of the tech prep team: T-shirts, mugs, book bags, business cards, nameplates for their desks or signs for their doors. These tokens make them feel special – and help advertise the tech prep logo.

"What makes teachers part of your team? Bribery is good!" jokes Pierson. "Seriously, it's good materials, a curriculum guide, paying them for appropriate graduate credits, providing assistance in buying materials and equipment. These things really help with early adopters."

In Kentucky, Davis says, the T-shirts and golf shirts she gives to team members have become the unofficial tech prep uniform. "It helps to build team spirit and identify them as having common goals," she says.

Byrski's consortium gave nice pens to teachers and T-shirts to people who served on steering committees or made presentations at conferences. "We've used all sorts of promotional trinkets," she says. "One principal bought tote bags and mugs to hand out at an in-service day. Everyone knows what tech prep is now, but special little items help to keep it in front of people."

It's also important to create opportunities for recognition at the school, consortium or state levels. For example, Connecticut will start naming a Tech Prep Educator of the Year in 1993-94. "We don't always know what motivates people to participate, so we need to put out as many internal motivators as we can," says Helmandollar. "We have found that things like Awards of Excellence and Pioneer Awards to educators are good."

Everything described in this chapter – from pats on the back to publicity to pens – can help make educators enthusiastic about tech prep. Sometimes the road from the start of a new program to the achievement of success seems long, and even the most dedicated staff members occasionally trip over a pothole. Whatever it takes, give your staff members the encouragement they need to keep moving forward.

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Chapter 5

Marketing Tech Prep to Counselors

"We are now at the point where we must educate people in what nobody knew yesterday, and prepare in our schools for what no one knows yet but what some people must know tomorrow."

—Margaret Mead
Anthropologist

Without question, counselors are one of the keys to tech prep's success. The counselor is the most common liaison between the school, student and parents. They're also the people most frequently involved in helping students develop long-range educational and career plans.

Counselors also can become important change agents within their schools, infusing the curriculum with career awareness activities and experiences. Since they possess a global view of education that's not tied to one discipline, they can even help bridge the gap between the academic and technical staffs.

However, many practitioners say counselors can be a tough audience to sell on tech prep. There are several reasons why counselors may be unresponsive.

Many counselors have been informed, explicitly or implicitly, that they exist chiefly to ensure that as many graduates as possible enroll in good four-year colleges. This places tremendous pressure on counselors. "No one would question whether they are doing the right thing for a student if they steer him or her toward a four-year degree," says Walter, "but when they start talking about other options, they have the worry in the back of their mind that someone might accuse them of doing less than the best for this child. Also, schools are judged by the amount of scholarship dollars graduates receive. The whole system is very oriented toward four-year college."

Because people who train counselors know that most high school counselors will be expected to concentrate on getting students into four-year colleges, that's the role they prepare them for. It's possible to complete certification requirements in some counselor training programs with only **one course** in career guidance.

Colleges make it easy for counselors to work with students who want to apply for admission. They provide lots of materials and frequent visits from admissions personnel. But before tech prep came along, only generic information about technical careers was available to counselors and students. There was no specific career pathway that they could sit down and study together, mapping out a plan for the student to follow through high school and on to the local community or technical college. It took time to find the information – if there was any to be had – and a counselor who may be responsible for 500 or more students doesn't have much time.

Along with being overworked, counselors are pulled in many directions. Most educators understand what's expected of an English teacher, but there's no clear picture of exactly what counselors are supposed to do. This uncertainty probably exists because the counseling profession is relatively young – sizable numbers of counselors have been in the schools only since the early '60s. Since the counselor's role is not well defined, frequently they are stuck doing whatever needs doing in a school—the job of a clerk, a hall monitor or a substitute teacher. That's very likely why, when they're asked to take on new responsibilities for tech prep, some counselors may be less than enthusiastic.

Counselors also may be cautious about appearing to "steer" a child into a specific program such as tech prep. "Counselors are always getting blamed," says Helmandollar, "but from their perspective, it's not ethical for them to recruit for tech prep or anything else. Basically, they're used to a kid saying, 'I want to do this,' and the counselor showing him or her the path."

On the plus side, counselors have a "gut-level commitment to kids," as one tech prep administrator put it. Once they understand how tech prep can benefit many of the students they work with, they'll likely become its strongest proponents. After all, counselors are the people most aware of how many kids fall through the cracks.

"Counselors have tremendous compassion for the group of kids tech prep serves," Helmandollar says. "They've seen kids go off to college who weren't equipped for it. When I

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was a counselor I was very comfortable at registration time when a kid said he or she wanted to go to college. I knew exactly what courses the student would need, because counselors know what colleges expect – they've provided him or her with plenty of helpful information. If a kid wants a tech prep career, however, and the counselor doesn't have information and can't be very helpful, the natural tendency is to shy away from it."

Making Counselors Part of the Team

From the inception of the tech prep program, counselors need to have an active voice in its design. Because they'll play such an important role in presenting tech prep to others, you must include them at every step in the development process.

To sell counselors on tech prep, you must start by convincing them it can have such a powerful, positive influence on students.

Some counselors may not realize just how badly a change is needed. "Although counselors often indicate that all their students are headed for baccalaureate degrees, they don't follow up their graduates' progress," says Yoseloff. "Where they think the kids are going in June is **not** where they are the next January."

Where they think the kids are going in June is not where they are the next January.

—Darlene Yoseloff, coordinator, Middlesex Tech Prep Initiative, Edison, New Jersey

If counselors don't know what's happening to graduates, it should be a top priority to collect and analyze this data. Counselors aren't providing the assistance they should if supposedly college-bound kids either don't make it to the first day of classes or drop out after the first semester. These kids are likely to run into real problems because they probably have no skills to fall back on. You should help counselors see that tech prep prepares students for college **and** work.

As with administrators and teachers, for counselors seeing is believing. They need to visit outstanding tech prep programs around the country and to hear other counselors describe the successes they've experienced. Because dropouts, truants and low test scores are usually prominent items on a counselor's agenda, data about tech prep's influence on these problems will be especially meaningful.

Counselors should meet with their counterparts in the schools they visit to look at the career planning materials they've developed and find out how they use them. This will help them understand that, once tech prep is in place, it really **is** as easy to advise a student interested in a technical career as one headed for a four-year college.

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Encouraging Ownership

Make sure counselors feel ownership in the tech prep program. Never make the mistake of assuming you can tell them about it after everything is in place and then expect them to be enthusiastic about selling it to students and parents. In Mello's consortium, a counselor sits on the management board that makes major program decisions. "She has a lot of credibility with other counselors and keeps them informed about what's going on," Mello says.

Counselors in Byrski's consortium designed some of the marketing materials to use with local groups, redesigned the four-year plans for students and helped with curriculum development. "They have been a part of tech prep from day one," Byrski says, "because we knew we couldn't sell it to them if they hadn't been in on it from the start. Counselors must be involved with and understand everything that goes on with teachers. Many of them participated in workshops on integration and learning styles. They wanted to know more about what goes on in the classroom."

Teaching Counselors About Tech Prep

Your program must provide opportunities for counselors to learn about tech prep in general and your curriculum specifically. Counselors must:

- Learn about career clusters, articulation agreements, and the sequencing of courses between the secondary and postsecondary levels so they can advise students and parents about appropriate options.
- Become familiar with every aspect of the tech prep curriculum, including applied academics and the new emphasis on work-related skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and teamwork. They need to understand that the content of the applied courses is rigorous and that students who enroll in them are not settling for second-best.
- Learn how to provide all students with interest and aptitude assessments. Counselors also must learn how to help students map out four-year education and career goals no later than the eighth grade.

Generally, counselor training can take three forms:

1. State or regional workshops
2. In-service training at the regional or local level
3. Workshops or classes designed for teachers

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Arkansas trained 1,000 counselors about tech prep in 15 regional conferences. "They understood college prep; now they know how easy it is to do career planning with other students," says Baker. "Once they understood, they bought in. We have an exact program of study for kids in grades 9-12. The counselor can pull out the planner we call a 'drawing board' and fill in the right courses for whatever a student wants to do.

State workshops helped counselors in Mayse's South Carolina district broaden their sights. "We took our counselors to a series of workshops led by the state director of career guidance, who talked about a comprehensive career guidance plan for K-12," Mayse says. "Our counselors had been thinking only in terms of the particular grade they worked with."

Various types of in-service programs, either at the regional or local level, also can be useful. Here are some examples:

- Counselors in Mayse's consortium said they needed more career information, along with interest and learning styles inventories. "We in-serviced them on all these materials," Mayse says. "The counselors knew nothing about career interest inventories, and they are one of the tools that can really help students. Apparently this has been viewed as the domain of the vocational schools, not the regular educational program. We encouraged the counselors to go back to their schools and do faculty in-service so that every teacher becomes a career counselor. Our goal is to get the entire school system to take on the job of career guidance."

- "We provide in-service for counselors, some of it for college credit," says Tulsa's Hunter. "Sometimes we pay them to attend workshops in the summer, after school and on weekends. High school counselors want to know how courses in their schools tie in with college admissions requirements. We involve community college people at every step."

- Yoseloff's New Jersey consortium is planning in-service sessions for counselors that will include hands-on lab activities. "The activities and tour of the college's lab facilities will mirror the tech prep recruitment day planned for high school sophomores," she says.

Counselors also must learn everything there is to know about the tech prep curriculum in their own schools. Sometimes the most effective way for them to do this is to attend classes or workshops designed for teachers.

"One counselor called me and wanted to take the teacher training for advanced applied math," says Musgrave. "He said he wanted to know more about the course because he didn't think he was well enough informed to counsel students. After spending two days in-depth training, the counselor said, 'Boy, have my eyes been opened! I had no idea it was anything like this. **All** counselors should do this.' He planned to come back for a weeklong workshop in August and spend one day in each discipline. He's also encouraged other counselors to participate."

In Roberts' consortium, counselors and administrators often attend workshops designed for teachers. In some cases, they make up one-third of the audience.

Any training – whether it be conferences, in-service, or classes – must be followed up to ensure that the lessons have taken hold. "We visit counselors often to see how they're doing," says Stogner. "Sometimes we have to lean on them a little to get them to understand what the real issues are and to recognize the need for change. We expect them to work with every child to develop a career education plan by mid-eighth grade. We don't want them guiding students into lower-level classes and telling them they may fail if they try more demanding courses."

Making the 'Other' College Connection

Because tech prep is "another way of going to college," counselors need to become familiar with those "other" postsecondary institutions: the community and technical colleges. Some high school counselors may never have set foot in either one. Look for outstanding people in these schools to mentor your counselors and help them understand that two-year institutions have a lot to offer students. And help your secondary counselors establish strong relationships with postsecondary counselors and admissions personnel so everyone understands how courses in each sequence build upon each other.

In Omaha, Possehl created an exchange program for university and community college counselors, who then went together to meet with high school counselors. All the counselors developed a networking system that helped them get to know one another and the various campuses.

Nurturing Relationships With Business

Even more than teachers, counselors need to nurture relationships with business, industry and labor. They should spend enough time with employers to learn first-hand about

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changing technology, what jobs are available now and anticipated in the future, what workers do and what new-hires are expected to know. To be of maximum help to students and parents, counselors must know the requirements of **every** job for which their articulated programs provide training.

"We encourage counselors to spend time finding out what's going on in business and industry," says O'Brien. "It's their job to keep up with changing technology so they can advise students on careers."

Sixteen counselors and teachers from Stogner's district spent three days visiting businesses and industries. They then developed activities to give students information about high tech careers and planning for post-high school education.

Recognizing Counselors as Professionals

As you're training counselors and getting them excited about tech prep, remember to treat them as professionals. As one practitioner noted, tech prep may finally free counselors to do what they should have been doing all along and allow them to shed the miscellaneous chores better relegated to support staff.

"We try to show counselors that if they approach tech prep counseling in the right way, it can free them from many of the mundane chores they've been stuck with: clerical work, hall and bus duty," says Mayse. "Tech prep becomes an advocate for counselors to do what they are supposed to do to best utilize their training and skills."

To ease counselors' loads, Davis' Kentucky district created an Office for Student Employment. The office, staffed with two career counselors, an aide and a secretary, works with eighth graders on assessment and individual career plans. "We do **not** use our counselors as clerks," she says.

In Arkansas, Highfill recommended hiring two more counselors. "The schools, recognizing the need, picked up three-fourths of the cost," she says. "They can use local Perkins money to pay for things like this at the eighth-grade level, while tech prep grant money is used in the higher grades. I hope people will see the necessity of moving some of this money down. We need to build a firm foundation for tech prep."

In other districts, teachers help relieve some of the burden that tech prep places on counselors. "Our teachers and counselors decided they had to work together to help stu-

dents, rather than blaming one another because students weren't learning," says Wisconsin's Battist. "In one of our high schools, every member of the professional staff has a daily advisory period to work with eight to ten students. They stay with the same group all through high school, helping them choose courses and consider post-high school plans. The counselors are used for technical assistance and for training teachers to use career information systems.

"This broadens the students' support system for career choices to include everyone in the school," she adds. "It works best where everyone assumes it is a joint role. We have funded a person who goes to the junior high schools and works with counselors to figure out what will best meet the needs of students in that school. We got counselor buy-in because our program fits into their existing structure."

Teachers also help counselors in O'Brien's Florida district. "We sell the idea of a counselor as a manager, rather than the person solely responsible for counseling students. Vocational teachers talk with students about careers in their fields," he says. "Academic teachers can also be involved. For example, English teachers can assign essays on careers or field trips students have taken."

Assembling Resources for Counselors

Just as teachers need revised curriculum materials to make tech prep work, counselors also need new "tools of the trade." It's important to give them everything they need to sell tech prep to students and parents: videos, brochures and other career planning materials.

"You need to get counselors together and ask them what tech prep resources will help them do their job – what information they need in what format," says Helmandollar. "Do they need brochures, catalogs? Tell them you're not asking them to do more.

A general information video is essential. It's better to have two, aimed at different age groups and interests. Locally filmed productions featuring recognizable "talent" can be very effective if you can afford to have them professionally done. If not, some excellent videos are available from other sources. Make plenty of copies available in schools, public libraries and video rental stores for free borrowing.

You'll need brochures, too – preferably one for students and another for parents and other adults. As your marketing campaign broadens and gains momentum, you'll probably also want to add posters, fact sheets, flyers and perhaps give-away

items. (More information about marketing materials for particular audiences is included in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.)

Don't just toss marketing materials at counselors, though – enlist them in preparing the items. "Counselors must help develop the materials they will use with students and parents, so they will have ownership in it," says High.

Bryski agrees. "We have found that counselors know what appeals to kids and for this reason we ask their advice a lot," she says. Counselors also can help you develop handbooks they'll use with students. The handbooks should explain how tech prep works, list the benefits it provides, describe courses, lay out sample career plans for each tech prep program and include any other information that will help students make good career choices. The handbooks should be inexpensive enough that every student can have one to take home. Holm says the handbook her Gainesville consortium developed, which included lots of information about available jobs and their salaries, "was a real eye opener." In addition, counselors can help design a career portfolio or other type of document for students to use for long-range educational and career plans.

In some districts, counselors also write guidebooks for themselves so they all have the same information. These "bibles" frequently contain a short history of the tech prep movement, local goals, integration models, an implementation guide, course descriptions, articulation agreements, sample career plans and copies of relevant magazine articles.

Finally, counselors can help develop a career-planning resource center stocked with every video, book and pamphlet you can afford. The center should include a regularly updated career information system like Missouri's MoVIEW, which is available on microfiche and computer disk, and generic information about careers such as a copy of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*.

A truly useful center also has a collection of information about locally available jobs that includes educational requirements, outlook for the future, opportunities for advancement, salary ranges. It's ideal to keep this information in a loose-leaf format that lists each job on a separate page so students can easily photocopy descriptions of jobs that interest them.

Chapter 6

Marketing Tech Prep to Employers

"Unless we implement more effective methods of teaching the disadvantaged, we may have to learn how to tolerate the intolerable. And this could include acceptance of a stunted economy, weakened by a shortage of skilled workers, and acceptance of a permanent underclass, shut out of society through a lack of education.

"The business part of our society is paying for education at least twice, and maybe three times. We pay for it first through tax support for our public schools. We pay for it again when we have to re-educate workers who were not trained right the first time. And the third cost, the most serious cost, is the loss of productivity, over and over and over again."

—William H. Kolberg
President
National Alliance of Business

No one has to tell employers that drastic changes are needed in the educational system that produces their workers. In marketing tech prep to them, one message is key: With their support and involvement, tech prep can produce the workers they must have to successfully compete in a global economy.

Business is more than ready for tech prep. Most employers don't question the need for it. Instead, they're far more likely to ask, "How quick can you do this?"

Employers are happy to help you knock down the walls that have separated education and business. "Too often in the past it was 'we' and 'they,'" Hagestuen says. "It just can't be that way anymore. Everyone must be involved."

Employers can become important allies in getting your program started and making it successful. "Business people are why we started tech prep," says Byrski. "They went to the county commissioner, the college president and school

superintendents and said, 'We're not getting the quality of students we need.' The educators did some research and decided to adopt the tech prep concept before anyone was putting out money for its development. Business people have been essential in helping to promote the program."

Arkansas' Baker agrees that business support is crucial. "We just show employers the plan and they **love** it," she says. "They knew all along what was wrong with schools. They like applied academics because it has a workplace component. We meet with them individually and go over the plan. Lots of major employers bought in when they saw the curriculum. They see actual workplace applications and get very excited about it. They have helped us sell it to the schools!"

Words from Employers

"'In an era when competitive advantage is fleeting, when change is constant and the whole globe is home base, America needs a new vision of success. In the face of rapid change, the first recourse of a nation, an institution or an individual is the ability to learn quickly. The hard truth is that the United States has not invested in that ability while other nations have, and consequently we are not as competitive in the global marketplace.'

—*America's Leaders Speak Out on Business-Education Partnerships*, published by the National Alliance of Business/Institute for Educational Leadership.

Making Employers Part of the Team

Nearly every practitioner agrees that the best way to approach business and industry people initially is one-on-one. In many districts, teachers and counselors have met with employers to explain what tech prep is and what's in it for them. Sometimes the personal contact is preceded by a letter signed by the superintendent of schools, the community college president, the Chamber of Commerce president—even the mayor.

"We contracted with 15 teachers to do interviews with 300 local businesses, getting information about them and developing one-on-one relationships and partnerships," says Mello of Arizona. "The latter was as important as the information they collected."

Helmandollar's Roanoke consortium sent out 51 teachers to survey 670 businesses that were members of the Chamber of Commerce. "They sat down and talked one-on-one and left a self-addressed postcard asking the business people to indicate if they enjoyed the experience and what they thought of the interview and tech prep," Helmandollar says. "The response was overwhelmingly positive. The attitudes of business toward education had undergone a change."

Adler also uses one-on-one contacts. "Each instructor has a responsibility to spend time with employers at the worksite, talking, arranging for internships, checking on job openings and providing the best students for interviews," she says.

The Chamber of Commerce isn't the only place where you can find lists of businesses to target. "Through the Small Business Development Center we got names of employers who were graduates of technical colleges and others who had complained about poorly prepared workers," says

Idaho's Lowe. "We met with them, mostly one-on-one, to find out what their needs are."

While many practitioners like one-on-one contacts, Portland's McClure believes that group meetings are more effective in selling tech prep. "In groups employers soon realize they all have the same concerns," he says. "It's important for them to realize we're talking a different ball game than they experienced with the old vocational education advisory committees. Tech prep requires a deeper commitment from business and industry. We move meetings around so that employers can get into various schools and see that changes **are** being made."

All employers, whether contacted one-to-one or through groups, should be given information packets about tech prep. "We use presentation packets that show exactly what students will take in each sequence," says Holm. Each packet should include a mail-back card with room for comments and a place to indicate the employer's interest in becoming involved. As with all other marketing materials, the packet should have a professional appearance and be the best the consortium can afford. People usually assume that a program's quality is reflected in the materials it distributes.

A Kickoff Event

Once the initial contacts have been made, it's good to have a grand kickoff event for employers. It should include a meal or at least nice refreshments. If you can afford it, hire a leading practitioner to speak. Better yet, ask the practitioner to bring along one or two of the program's top business supporters. That's because employers – like everyone else – listen best to their peers. If you can't afford a speaker, show a video and explain the tech prep program. In addition, distribute plenty of handouts. And finally, make sure everyone gets a chance to sign up as a tech prep supporter.

This kickoff – your first opportunity to impress employers as a group – will set the tone for your alliance with them. Allow time for feedback. Listen to what they have to say. But be respectful of their time constraints, too. Announce in advance when the meeting will end and keep to that schedule, except for informal chats afterward.

Follow up the kickoff meeting with a thank-you letter to those who attended. Include a form on which they can check the committees or other activities they want to work on. Be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope with every form, or print the form on a prepaid postcard.

The Japanese Story

"A highlight of the Japanese success story, is that nation's goal and ability to bring underachieving students into the ranks of the well-educated, creating a greater pool of talent for business to draw upon.

"The Japanese are proud to boast that they have the best bottom half in the world and they clearly do. 'For too long, we, as a people, thought we could get along with the best top half, which we clearly have. The good news is that we still have what it takes – the top half. The bad news is that we have not begun to think seriously enough about what it is going to take to bring up the bottom half."

—Dennis P. Doyle, Hudson Institute, in *America's Leaders Speak Out on Business-Education Partnerships*, published by the National Alliance of Business/Institute for Educational Leadership.

Business Pays for Poorly Prepared Workers

The costs to business of an ill-prepared workforce "are staggering and afflict businesses wherever they turn," according to *A Blueprint for Business on Restructuring Education*, another booklet prepared by the National Alliance of Business and the Institute for Educational Leadership. The booklet cites these examples:

- ☐ At a telephone company, recruitment costs skyrocketed when 86 percent of 22,900 applicants failed entry-level tests in English and problem solving.
- ☐ An insurance clerk authorized paying $2,200 on a $22 claim because she did not understand decimals.
- ☐ A steel mill employee ordered $1 million of the wrong parts because he could not understand written instructions.
- ☐ A United States electronics firm spends an average of $250 to train workers in quality control techniques, while its Japanese competitor spends 50 cents to prepare its average employee. The same U.S. company will spend $30 million over the next five years on remedial education.

Besides making one-on-one or group contacts and holding a kickoff meeting, you need to talk to as many civic and business organizations as possible. It's often good to start with professional associations for human resources professionals. Their members can often introduce you to other groups that will be helpful. At each presentation, show your video, pass out brochures and sign-up forms and encourage two-way communication. No one wants to participate in a movement that tells them what to do but isn't interested in their input.

What Firms to Approach

When marketing to businesses, reach out to all of them regardless of size. Don't be surprised, though, if your greatest success occurs with small and medium-size firms. There are many reasons for this, but three stand out:

1. There's less bureaucracy to wade through in a small or mid-size firm. "It takes a long time to arrange things with big business, and then they will usually take only three or four students," High says. "A small business may take a couple of kids, and it can be set up in one meeting."
2. Numerous studies show that much of the nation's job growth is occurring in smaller firms. "We are targeting small businesses," says Possehl, "because they lead in creating new jobs."
3. Small and mid-size firms may be eager to participate because they don't have as many options as larger firms for solving workforce problems. These firms "see an immediate need and have nowhere else to go for help," Pierson says.

The only problem with approaching people from small and mid-size firms is that they're usually extremely busy. "It's harder to get people from small businesses to attend meetings because they can't get away," says Yoseloff. "We promise that our roundtable sessions will last no longer than 75 minutes."

Of course, you shouldn't overlook the local branches of huge national corporations. Some of them are willing to allocate lots of resources – both money and people – to help schools.

"We point to Boeing as an example of a big company that chose to spend money for teacher in-service and student internships in order to decrease the need for retraining future employees," says Coon. "With the experience of Boeing's commitment, we are able to gain the support of other busi-

ness, industry and labor reps for tech prep educational reform and other secondary school-to-work transition initiatives."

Make sure that every business, no matter how big or small or whether they've signed up yet, receives your consortium newsletter. Reading about the successes of tech prep will encourage others to get on the bandwagon.

Opportunities for Involvement

Once you've gained employers' support, give them something worthwhile to do. Let them know how they can contribute, and encourage them to choose the activities they find most meaningful. Show them – by actions as well as words – that you expect them to be equal partners. Let them know that the level of commitment required is very different than with the old vocational advisory committees. Many of them have unpleasant memories of wasting time in those groups, where little of importance ever happened. Provide opportunities for them to take ownership.

There are almost as many ways to involve employers as there are employers. Here are some examples:

- "Business and industry people are helping us with promotion, telling us what they and other employers need to hear," says Possehl. "It is very effective for employers to hear their peers say, 'This is something we need. Your bottom line is going to improve because you will get the type of employee that will benefit your company, with the work skills and ethics you're looking for. They understand technology and have good basic academic skills.' Business and industry have been dying to get people like this."

- Buntzen's New Jersey consortium makes strong use of advisory boards that include business people. "We interact with advisory boards to make sure the skills and competencies their companies need are what schools are teaching. We familiarize them with our equipment," he says. "We rely on them to look to us when they need employees, and they give our graduates a little advantage in hiring since they know the training they have received is matched to employers' needs and wants." One advisory board is composed of 12 automotive dealers, and Buntzen hopes to establish automotive apprenticeships. "Because of the expense of setting up this program in the community college," he says, "we would like for each dealer to guarantee one job every other year, thus assuring us of at least six openings a year."

Business Understands Its Role in Education

The following list, adapted from *Who Will Do the Work?*, from the National Alliance of Business and the Institute for Educational Leadership, is a quick overview of what educators should expect from their business partners.

- ☐ Promise to secure job opportunities for qualified students.
- ☐ Provide information for and help design a curriculum that effectively prepares youth for work.
- ☐ Secure funds to support the hiring of students.
- ☐ Influence policy and resource decisions that will enhance the collaborative program.
- ☐ Provide leadership, commitment and support.
- ☐ Determine how many jobs exist or could be created to provide students with a valuable work experience.
- ☐ Identify supervisors who will understand students' abilities and limitations.
- ☐ Outline career paths for student workers.
- ☐ Designate a single contact to channel communications among the businesses and the schools, create a referral system and methods for monitoring student performance.
- ☐ Support and give recognition to supervisors, other employees and students involved in the program.

- In Roanoke, an Educators in the Workforce program has been successful. "Teachers went out and worked from two days to three weeks to see how math and science are used on the job," Helmandollar says.

- "Each year we invite business and industry representatives and all the school administrators in the county to a three-day 'educational summit' to talk about the needs of business and how schools are falling short," says O'Brien of his Florida program. "Our tech prep grant was actually written out of these meetings. We don't accept business telling us that they don't know what they want. They have to be specific."

- In Wisconsin, Battist's consortium developed a student portfolio that includes a transcript, a Certificate of Employability and examples of projects the student has completed. "There's a faculty check-off sheet for such competencies as good attendance, work skills and the ability to do a resume and for participation in workshops on job values, team building and the like," she says. "Employers are urged to ask to see an applicant's portfolio, and we hope they will give extra consideration to graduates who have more than just a diploma."

- "Business people are much more actively involved in our planning committees than they were in the old vocational advisory committees," O'Brien says. "They meet once a month in the classroom with teachers and students and have lots of input about what goes on in the classroom. We have an advisory committee for each tech prep 'academy,' so they are involved with both vocational and academic classes."

Getting Employers Into Schools

Make sure your new partners spend time in the schools to see what actually goes on in the classrooms and shops. Have them visit both technical and academic programs. Encourage them to talk with students about the requirements of the workplace – and to teach some classes themselves. Arrange for them to host students and educators in the workplace, starting with tours and advancing to part-time employment opportunities.

It's also important to ask employers to show off what they do at career fairs, technology days and tech prep sign-up week events. These events are positive PR for them in the community. Have them speak at PTA meetings, parent nights and other school activities. Make sure they get their picture or a story in the local paper occasionally.

"To celebrate Technology Week, we set up exhibits in the town square and got a lot of local businesses to show what they do," says Helmandollar.

In Kentucky, Davis' program invited employers to participate in its Tech Prep Fair. "Several employers had booths at our Tech Prep Fair to show how their employees use reading and math skills, demonstrate other skills needed on the job and what their companies produce," she says. "Besides promoting tech prep, it was a good community awareness activity for the business and industry people. About 2,400 students in grades 8-11 attended the three-day fair the week before they registered for next year's classes. Radio stations broadcast live from the fair. We got a lot of good public relations from it."

Employer participation in tech prep fairs and other events helps attract attention to your program. It's only one way employers can help you market tech prep to their peers, to students and to parents. You also can ask them to feature tech prep in their employee publications. You'll reach lots of parents that way, and having their employer support tech prep will reinforce the program's value. Some business people also may have public relations or marketing personnel who can help with your campaign.

To be effective, all your marketing efforts aimed at employers must be ongoing. You can't just have a fancy dinner and then never talk to employers again. It's especially critical to continue the one-to-one contacts you started at the beginning of your marketing campaign.

Keep stressing the key message to business: With their support and involvement, tech prep can produce the workers they need.

Selling your program should become even more of a snap after you turn out your first few "crops" of graduates and employers start seeing positive results. As Adler says, "The best marketing we can do to employers is to provide them with results that are tangible – students who are prepared to work."

Chapter 7

Marketing Tech Prep to Students

"You can't prepare today's students for tomorrow's world using yesterday's methods."

—Maggie Rice
Curriculum Coordinator
Leander (Texas) ISD

"Whatever you teach, make the children understand why they are studying it. Don't tell them, 'You'll need it later.' Later doesn't exist."

—Fred Hechinger
Former Education Editor of the New York Times
NASSP Bulletin
October 1984

Once students understand tech prep and what it can do for them, it practically sells itself. As teenagers in one focus group said, "Just tell us what it is and where to sign up."

- Kids like the hands-on aspects of tech prep.

They like the fact that what they're learning relates to life after graduation.

- They like being able to earn college credit while they're still in high school.
- They like hearing from people in business and industry that good jobs await them.
- They like knowing that the skills they're learning will enable them to earn more money than people without specialized training.
- Perhaps most of all, they like the feeling that they're in control of their lives, they have a plan to follow, and they know what's waiting for them when they complete it.

However, most kids don't have the information or the maturity to map out a plan on their own. They need someone to take a personal interest in them, to help them determine what goal to aim for and to explain what they need to do to reach it. They need someone to tell them about tech prep.

How to Reach Students

You can't start too early talking with children about careers and starting them thinking about the kind of job they'd like to have someday.

"We began a 2+2 program 10 years ago, but didn't stress the career education and awareness in grades K-8 that was needed to support it," says Texas' Key. "I guess we just expected students to wake up one morning in eighth grade and say, 'Hey, I think I'll be this!' Now we have intense career assessment in grades 7-8, with testing, counseling and the involvement of parents, if the child has them. We're working on bringing this aspect down to K-6."

As Key says, it's best to start your educational and marketing efforts in the primary grades. Elementary teachers can find endless opportunities to weave career information into their daily lesson plans. Parents can be invited to talk to their child's class about what they do at work and the education they needed to get hired. They also can tell students that it's often necessary to get additional training to meet new job challenges, planting the seed that lifelong learning is necessary.

Stories and pictures from newspapers and magazines can be discussed in class and posted on the bulletin board. Students can learn about job clusters, the training required for various positions and the salaries employees earn. Teachers can help them think about how the skills they're learning in math, science, language arts and social studies will be useful in different jobs.

In middle school, students can build on what they learned during the elementary years. Employers can talk to classes and students can take field trips to various businesses and prepare reports on careers that interest them. With any of these activities, class discussions are crucial.

This background, along with the results of learning style, interest, aptitude and ability tests, should help students make career planning decisions in the eighth or ninth grade. After hearing about tech prep for years, those students interested in it will be in a good position to know which program they want to enter. When students realize

Technology Literacy Program Offered

The Technology Student Association has launched Technokids, a national technology literacy program for grades K-6. Using the existing curriculum in such subjects as math, science, English and history, children learn brainstorming, problem solving, analytical thinking, decision making and teamwork. Technokids provides activity guides, posters, essay challenges, a Technology Bowl team competition, a children's technology newsletter and an awards and recognition program. For more information, contact TSA at 1914 Association Drive, Reston VA 22091; (703) 860-9000.

that teachers and counselors take their decisions seriously, they will be confident they have the potential to do well.

"When marketing to students we focus a lot on planning, telling them they can't wait until their senior year," says Maryland's Byrski. "We do a lot of career development in the middle schools, so by ninth grade they are ready to make some decisions. They know what tech prep is and the options they have and are prepared to do a career plan."

In many districts, middle school students and parents have lengthy discussions with teachers and counselors while developing the student's career plan. "To ensure more personal attention to kids, we selected 30 teachers and gave them intensive professional development as registration counselors," Walker says of her Kentucky program. "During a two-night period, each of them worked with eight students and their parents to develop individual career plans. We showed an eight-minute video on tech prep over in-house TV and provided each family with a booklet of information. The 'counselors' had students' test scores, grades and results of learning style and interest inventories. Administrators and the regular counselors were available to answer questions. Ninety-three percent of the eighth graders and their parents showed up for the registration sessions the first year, and 79 of the 250 students signed up for tech prep. We would have been happy with half that many."

Messages for Students

As noted in Chapter 3, students – whether at middle schools or high schools – are attracted to tech prep by various messages about its value. For them, like everyone else, the bottom line is: "What's in it for me?"

Although most young people would not be so uncool as to admit it, the prospect of finishing high school can be pretty scary. Even those who never pick up a newspaper have heard that times are tough. Some of them have parents who've lost their jobs because they couldn't handle advances in technology. Many have older sisters and brothers – some with four-year college degrees – still living at home because they can't support themselves.

As students think about what they'll do after high school, explain that the applied courses available in tech prep will give them hands-on opportunities and a better chance than ever before to understand what they're being taught. Assure them that the material they'll study in the tech prep program for the next two, four or six years will be just as difficult as in the college prep track, but that it will be more fun

Colleges Offer Technology Camps

Many community colleges offer summer camps where students as young as eighth grade can experience an entertaining, hands-on approach to career exploration.

"The community college hosted four weeks of summer camp, two weeks each for eighth and tenth graders, with 16 students in each group," says Julia Nichols of Illinois. "We exposed them to technology and its applications in various careers. Students built robots, worked on CAD systems, prepared computerized career inventories and visited local businesses and industries. They worked in teams and made presentations at the end of their session about what the experience had meant to them."

Northcentral Technical College in Wisconsin held a summer camp for junior high kids. Bettyann Battist of Wisconsin says, "We chose the junior high level because those students don't have quite as much going on in the summer as older students. Because we had to charge about $50, we were a little concerned about filling the spots, but we got 95 kids the first year without any trouble.

"Participants do projects in various career areas," Battist adds. " Once they're involved, we talk about the courses they need to prepare for each job and what the postsecondary career options are. Other technical colleges in Wisconsin have similar programs."

and easier to learn. Stress that, while teachers' expectations will be very high, you **know** they have the ability to succeed. And most important, emphasize that tech prep will prepare them for life after high school.

"Tech prep's biggest selling point is its connection to the real world," Walter says. "It will market itself if you just tell people the truth. They have such a stereotype in their minds about what a four-year degree will do that no one has to market that. We need to tell them the truth about what they can expect from a four-year degree in the '90s – that it is no longer an automatic ticket to wherever they want to go.

"We don't want to scare people away from a four-year college, but they need to know they can spend $40,000 for a degree there and be seriously underemployed when they graduate," she adds. "People need to make decisions with their eyes open. Kids need to be aware that the real world is not Arnie Becker of "L.A. Law" driving a Jag. We need to help them envision themselves preparing for a career, getting a good job and being successful . . . and then help them make this a reality."

The jobs connection. Many districts make a special effort to explain the job market kids will face. "We stress that the world is changing," says Minnesota's Hagestuen. "So many kids just assume there will be something out there for them after high school, and we instill awareness that this doesn't happen very often. We tell them if they get to the 12th grade and don't have some goals in mind, they're going to be in trouble. If they become involved in tech prep, they will have a job in the 21st century and be prepared. We're being honest, and students appreciate it. We tell them, 'You're not taking algebra because we tell you to, but because you're going to need it, and here's why.' Honesty is the key."

Key takes a similar approach. "We tell them the truth – it's a hard world these days in Texas," she says. "I think in many respects students feel alienated. They hear how bad the job market is and what a poor job schools are doing to prepare kids to go to work. It's discouraging for them. Then they see all the tech prep courses and feel the energy and think, 'Here's something I can be a part of.'

"Jobs are what attract students to tech prep," Key adds. "They see older brothers and sisters who can't afford to live on their own and are still at home. Most tech prep kids are already working. They are serious about getting a skill so they can buy a car and move away from home."

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Employers can be extremely helpful in selling the jobs message. "Every year we bring in business and industry people, the community college president, the superintendent and the high school principal to do very high-tech, exciting assemblies for students in grades 7-11," says North Carolina's Stogner. "Employers' message to students is, 'If you want to come to work for us, we won't even talk to you without a high school diploma. If you finish high school but not a tech prep course of study, we might hire you if we have to, but you probably won't be promoted unless you get some additional education. To be useful to us you need a strong math and science background and good communications skills **and** you need some postsecondary education—an associate degree, two-year certificate or apprenticeship certification.'"

In Florida, Holm is also big on getting business people into schools to talk with students. "We brought business people into the schools to do a 'What's My Line' panel presentation," she says. "Students asked 20 questions to try to guess their jobs, then were able to visit the panelists at their worksites. Many parents also attended the panel presentations. This was **very** effective. We also paired high school students with business mentors in non-traditional technical careers. The students visited their mentors on the job and found out why high-level math and science will help them there."

Those visits help convince students of the value of the applied academics in tech prep. "Students like applied academics and working in teams," Rhode Island's Marmaras says. "It's much more practical than anything they've had before."

The visits also reinforce the notion that tech prep skills translate into jobs, which in turn translate into money. Money is an object of growing interest as students get older. "At about age 16, kids suddenly realize you **have** to have some money," Missouri's Doss says. "Before that, they just think it comes. It doesn't do any good to talk money to eighth graders, but by the sophomore level they realize that skills equal money. We stress the placement rate of graduates with technical skills."

Of course, before kids can make the connection between tech prep, jobs and money, they first have to be exposed to the opportunities available through technical careers. "Our biggest selling point is that students need a marketable skill," says O'Brien. "They think voc ed just means auto mechanics and don't think about computer programming, respiratory therapy and so on. We hit this hard and sell them on the opportunities in all high tech areas, stressing that in

two or four years after high school, they'll be at work in good jobs."

Helmandollar agrees. "We need to make the tech prep jobs in every field credible and glamorous and let students know about them," he says. "They have a good handle on what professionals and service workers do, but most kids know little about technical level jobs."

To get past the stigma that can be associated with voc ed, some consortia are working to change its image. "We have changed the names of our vocational centers to career and/or technical centers," Byrski says. "We have changed or upgraded the programs and the names of programs offered to make them more hands-on and high tech, which they are. For example, auto mechanics is now automotive technology.

"We now have some traditional college prep students (pre-nursing, for example) in the tech centers," she adds. "The image has changed to the point that they feel it's OK to go there. Most programs are half-day, so they can spend part of the time at their home school. This, too, helps us recruit better students. Students say, 'Hey, there are good kids on the bus to the tech center now, not just trouble-makers.'"

Worksite Experiences. One of the most effective marketing tools with students is the possibility of getting hands-on experience in a business or industry while they're still in high school. You also can use these work experiences to garner publicity for your program.

"The most excitement I've seen is the worksite experience we started in 1992, using Illinois tech prep dollars along with federal money," says Musgrave. "All tech prep teachers were offered a $50 incentive for each junior student they placed for work experience. The teacher had to contact the employer to set it up and get permission from parents for their student to participate. Each student worked 20 hours in five different businesses. These were non-paying positions, but each student got a $12.50 stipend to help with lunch, transportation or whatever else was needed. We did not want any student to be unable to participate because of financial problems. Teachers were responsible for students' behavior on the job."

Other practitioners also strongly believe in worksite experiences. "Students like being able to apply what they're learning, and they're impressed when they start to see how this applies to a transition from school to work," says Ray Harry, assistant director for the Washington State Board for Com-

munity and Technical Colleges. "Boeing created summer jobs for 25 students from five Puget Sound area high schools. They had lots of exposure to different kinds of manufacturing processes and were paid $1,000 for six weeks of eight-hours-a-day training in their factory training center. Boeing also provided protective clothing and all tools and supplies."

A similar program is being used in Connecticut. "In the summer after 11th grade, 45 students participated in a pilot intern program at Pratt-Whitney," says Gaulin. "They will go back for three more summers, working and learning on the job and earning more than minimum wage. They have different experiences at different facilities and are practicing communications, writing and math skills, decision making and problem solving, as well as producing a product. They must wear clothes appropriate for the job, show up on time each morning and return from lunch on time, come to work every day and stay till work hours are over."

Visits to Colleges. Students considering tech prep need to understand the various course sequences and articulation agreements with community and technical colleges. Eighth graders can be inspired by visits to the high school and college campuses.

"The articulation with technical colleges is a strong selling point," says Mayse. "We take high school kids there, and it is very surprising for them. They see things that look interesting that they want to do and can do. Postsecondary education suddenly looks very manageable to them. We stress that the applied courses are rigorous and demanding and that expectations for tech prep students are very high."

Yoseloff's program in New Jersey repeatedly sends high school students for visits to the community college. "We bring students to the community college campus as sophomores and give them 10- to 15-minute experiences in eight different labs," she says. "As juniors, they come back to do a lab activity with our staff, coordinated with what they're working on in their high school classes. When they are seniors, we pair them with community college students for lab activities and social interaction. They visit different parts of the campus, depending on their interests."

Gaulin's program also stresses repeat visits, hoping to make students comfortable with the transition from high school to college. "In the 10th grade, students tour the community college with their parents, attend presentations by college students and, with the help of their parents, go through the registration process just for practice. In the 11th grade they

We stress that the applied courses are rigorous and demanding and that expectations for tech prep students are very high.

—Sally Mayse, coordinator, Lowcountry Tech Prep Consortium in South Carolina

may visit the campus two or three times with a teacher or counselor and go through the registration process again. By the end of that year, they should have picked two college programs they're interested in. In their senior year their college visits concentrate on one program.

"If they decide to enter the college after high school, they can go through the registration process by themselves without anxiety," Gaulin continues. "They know what to do and don't have a lot of questions at that point. Becoming familiar with the campus, the programs and the registration process over a period of years takes a lot of anxiety out of the high school-to-college transition."

Earning college credit in high school. Another major selling point for students is that through tech prep, they can earn college credits while still in high school. This can save them both time and money.

"When we talk to prospective tech prep students, we tell them they're going to have to work hard and attend classes in high school anyway, and it would be nice if they entered college with 14 advanced credits," says Gaulin. "Many of them think it's too good to be true. They don't believe they can pay just $10 and get 14 college credits. But when they see the trust that's developed between the schools, see their friends graduate and visit the college campus themselves, they go back and tell their friends what a great place it is."

Quattrociocchi's Bellevue consortium also uses the lure of college credits. "It's one thing to tell kids they need a better education, but if you tell them they can earn college credit while they're still in high school, that impresses them," she says. "Teachers will tell them later they need to get an 'A' or a 'B' in the articulated courses and pass all the competencies to earn college credit, but we think they will do this once they've become interested enough to enroll."

At the North Missouri Tech Prep Consortium, students can earn up to 12 hours of college credit while still in high school. "They can use their head start to get through the community college quicker or to take additional courses," says Carol Gutshall, co-coordinator of the consortium with her husband Bill. "Every high school tech prep classroom has a poster on the wall saying, 'Did you know you can get college credit for this course?'"

Scholarships. Some states offer scholarships that can serve as strong marketing tools for tech prep, especially for students who wouldn't normally qualify for scholarships to four-year institutions. "Arkansas has Academic Challenge

scholarships that provide $4,000 for any student with the required GPA and family income below a certain point," says Baker. "All applied courses count toward the GPA. This is an incentive to participate."

Florida's Gold Seal Diploma program is similar. "If a student completes three vocational credits with a 3.5 GPA and the academic courses with a 3.0 GPA, he or she is eligible for a $2,000 scholarship renewable for four years," says O'Brien. "The number of recipients is doubling each year, but the legislature continues to fund it." In the course catalog, each class that counts toward the Gold Seal Diploma has a gold seal. These courses all have job-training components. "It is an opportunity for many kids that was previously available only to the top students in the school," O'Brien says.

Florida also has a private scholarship program that helps attract students to tech prep. High school students can participate in an apprenticeship program sponsored by Siemens Stromberg-Carlson, a major supplier of communication networks. They receive minimum wage for working 10 to 15 hours a week. When they go on to Seminole Community College, they can continue in the apprenticeship program and earn from $450 to $800 a month. Siemens also pays all college costs, including fees, tuition and books. After graduation, each apprentice is interviewed for a position with the company.

Making Students Your Chief Marketers

While many marketing strategies can help sell students on tech prep, peer influences exert an extremely strong pull. If students in the tech prep program are excited about what they're doing, their friends will hear about it and want to participate, too.

Of course, the reverse is also true. Negative comments from someone who's involved with tech prep can wipe out the positive perceptions another youngster has built up over a period of years. For this reason, it's important to help tech prep students understand the importance of their role as informal spokespeople for the program.

Los Angeles' Adler believes that word-of-mouth is the most effective form of marketing. "Ultimately it comes down to kids telling one another which programs are good and which aren't productive," she says. "If you have a quality product, they will recognize it and it will become an avalanche. Last year we had 1,000 more applications than we could accept."

In New York, LoPresti is another big fan of word-of-mouth. "Kids walk by a classroom, see what students are doing inside and want to be a part of it," she says.

Tech prep students also can play a more formal marketing role by sharing their successes through videos or live presentations. In addition, they can design newspaper and yearbook ads, produce newsletters and help with other marketing projects.

The MTV generation loves videos, and students especially respond to those featuring lots of kids their own age. "Videos are a great way to market to students, especially when they recognize the 'stars,'" says Holm. "When they see someone they know, they think, 'Look, there's so-and-so. I knew him when he was about to drop out of school, and now he's going to graduate, go on to college and get a good job. Who would have thought that! This is do-able.'"

As a side benefit, tech prep students can gain valuable skills by actually writing scripts for marketing videos and helping with their production through classes or student leadership groups. "One of the marketing classes at the community college took on tech prep as its project, and it grew to include several other departments on campus," Holm says. "The English Department helped with the scripts, the TV production department assisted with technical aspects, and the speech and multimedia departments were also involved. They produced community information spots that ran more than 400 times on radio and TV. Their involvement gave a fantastic student perspective on tech prep. Some of the community college students who worked on the project were parents, too, and they helped design ads with appeal for parents."

Tech prep students also can make presentations to visitors from other districts, students, staff members and parents. Their excitement can be really persuasive in selling tech prep. "Students in the program are the best salespeople," says Buntzen. "People will believe them more than administrators and teachers. Parents, teachers and other students all listen to kids."

Byrski's consortium asks tech prep students to serve on panels that help demonstrate the program. "It really gives their egos a boost when visitors send letters saying that students helped to sell tech prep to the administrators back in their districts," she says. Tech prep kids also can become mentors for younger students just considering tech prep, serve as tour guides for their programs and help staff booths at tech prep fairs and other community events.

In Holm's program, tech prep students design many of the marketing materials. "We sponsored a contest for students to design the ads for tech prep we placed in high school yearbooks and student newspapers," she says. "This was very successful. Students also designed bumper stickers and designed and produced buttons to advertise tech prep."

In Arkansas, the desktop publishing class at Highfill's high school produces a quarterly newsletter that always includes information about tech prep activities. "Students prepare and print the newsletter and run mailing labels," Highfill says. "It is sent to every high school student's home."

Tools You'll Need to Recruit Students

Consortia around the country use a variety of tools in recruiting students, everything from videos to billboards to brochures to trinkets. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination – and your budget.

Videos. We've already mentioned videos, which are extremely important. A good video, whether locally produced or generic, can attract a prospective student's attention better than any other marketing tool. Eight to ten minutes is about the right length for an introductory video about tech prep.

"We are in the process of creating videos to show the opportunities in all sorts of occupations in three different clusters," says Oklahoma's High. "Salaries and the experience needed for each job will be stressed."

In Wisconsin, Battist agrees. "We did a video with two students talking about how they found out about tech prep, the good jobs that are available and how kids can prepare themselves to get one of them," she says. "Too often we market the first step, rather than the results. What we're really selling are job opportunities."

Pierson's Michigan consortium produced two videos: one for eighth graders and the other for parents and other adults. "The community college aviation mechanics instructor wrote the scripts," he says. "You never know where you'll find talent for various projects."

TV and Radio Ads. Radio and TV commercials are effective if you can afford to air them frequently enough to make an impression. Stations may be willing to provide some free air time – often one free airing for each paid spot. If the high school or community college has a production studio and staff with professional expertise, you may be able to produce these in-house. But only go the in-house route if you're sure

your staff can do a good job. An unprofessional product will not project the image you want for your program.

Where should you run the commercials? On any station that kids are likely to watch or listen to. If your district has Channel One, the network that broadcasts to classrooms, you may be able to preempt one of the commercials to show your own ad.

Other districts run their commercials on local public access cable channels. "We are working on three 'infomercials' to run on cable," says Byrski. "Each county in the consortium will produce one on a theme that can be shared. They will develop their own ideas, and we will have them professionally produced. Students will write the scripts. One principal plans to have a script-writing contest. The finished products will be generic enough so that any district in the country can use them."

In Seattle, former vocational director Gerald Butts credits radio ads with a significant increase in enrollment. "All school districts in Washington have open enrollment, so Seattle kids can go from one school to another to pick the program they want," he says. "We're even starting to have students from outside Seattle drawn in by our extensive radio program for tech prep. We believe this is the reason for a slight increase in enrollment in city schools in 1992-93, after having experienced a decline from 100,000 to 44,000 over a period of years."

Ads on Theater Screens and Billboards. Ads on theater screens can reach lots of teenagers, especially if you can pick the movies they'll accompany. Many theaters will run the ads for free, although you'll have to pay the cost of making a slide or video.

"We asked local theaters to use an ad featuring our tech prep logo on the movie screens at the time of spring registration," says Holm. "They actually ran it for several months at no charge. They see it as a way of being in partnership with the schools."

Billboards are great if you can get donated space in good locations. However, you'll have to pay for printing and probably for installation as well.

"At registration time we put up six high-visibility billboards, one or two in each school district we cover," says Mayse. "The space was donated, but we paid for printing and installation."

Print Ads, Posters, Brochures, and Other Materials. Newspaper ads are more likely to reach adults than students, but they can help create positive feelings about tech prep. To reach students, place your print ads in athletic programs, yearbooks and student newspapers.

Posters and banners can be used effectively in school cafeterias, gyms, halls and counseling offices. Some schools also hang signs reading, "Did you know you can get college credit for this course?" in appropriate classrooms.

A well-designed, colorful brochure is a must to pass out in group meetings. It will remind students of the main points made in the presentation and give them something to take home to their parents. You may want to include a postage-free card to request more information and prominently display your address and telephone number. Produce the classiest-looking brochure you can afford. As Washington's Quattrociocchi says, "Nice-looking materials say 'value' to kids and parents."

It's important for brochures and other materials to have a first-class appearance— glossy, lots of color...

—Paul O'Brien, coordinator for Quad-County Tech Prep Consortium in Florida

In Florida, O'Brien agrees. "It's important for brochures and other materials to have a first-class appearance – glossy, lots of color and so on," he says. "People associate the quality of the program with what they see representing it."

Some consortia save production costs by creating generic materials. "We have 27 high schools in a six-county area," says Michigan's Pierson. "We produced a video and brochure that are not identified with any particular school to use with eighth graders. The brochures can be customized with stickers."

Get student input through focus groups or less structured means on every item you produce. They can tell you if the wording is easily understood and if the design, photos, graphics and colors are appealing. To represent a high tech program, you need materials that look high tech, too.

Trinkets. Some practitioners believe that money spent on give-away items – key chains, caps, book bags, book covers, pencils, pens, pins, magnets, puzzles, bumper stickers and T-shirts – is a good investment. The trinkets please the recipients and may serve as advertisements to others as well.

However, many practitioners feel that such items cheapen a program's image and should be used only as rewards, if at all. One practitioner suggested that buying these trinkets may alienate other educators by making it appear that tech prep is getting too much money.

"It's possible to spend a lot of money on trinkets, but our philosophy has been that they can make a program look cheap – like one of those federally funded projects that's here today and gone tomorrow," says South Carolina's Walter. "We have never relied on gimmicks. We did produce some T-shirts with the money we received from a national award, but all the other marketing items we've used, such as posters and book covers, have had an educational tie-in."

Missouri's Gutshall has another reason for avoiding trinkets. "We decided not to give out pencils and other items because we believe kids don't want to be identified as being different; they all want to be alike," she says. "We're avoiding anything that might be considered labeling."

Special Marketing Activities. Brainstorm about special activities to advertise your program and encourage enrollment. Tech prep fairs, career fairs and exhibits at county fairs and other community events can increase your program's visibility and boost public awareness.

Kids like pizzazz, excitement, glitter and noise. Here are some ideas for your event:

- Get sports or media celebrities to make appearances.
- Have popular DJs do live broadcasts.
- Give away balloons with the tech prep logo.
- Have a continuously running recruitment video.
- Let students and parents sign up for business and industry tours.
- Hand out brochures or other information that visitors can take home.
- Staff your event with teachers, counselors, and students who can answer questions.

Activities for students enrolled in tech prep may not be considered marketing efforts, since the kids are already signed up. But the excitement they generate can rub off, encouraging other students to get involved. For example, if you can afford it (or if a business will pay for the food), you can have an orientation dinner for new enrollees and their parents.

Here are other examples from around the country of special activities that work:

- Buntzen's consortium used a display in the education tent at the Horse and Farm Show, the largest fair in New Jersey, and booths at a career day at the college and at

an eighth-grade basketball tournament to advertise tech prep.

- "The Tech Prep Expo we held for new eighth graders and ninth graders who have declared as tech prep students was a great marketing tool," says Walker of her Kentucky program. "We set up professionally draped booths in the gym for 50 local businesses to show how they use technology and talk about the skills they're looking for in workers. Students browsed in a fair-like atmosphere with local DJs giving away tech prep T-shirts, mugs and other prizes. It gave tech prep great visibility."

- In St. Mary's County, 60 businesses participate in a Passport Program that rewards tech prep students who do well. "Students with a certain grade point average, fewer than six absences in a semester and no disciplinary action receive cards from business people in a Success Assembly," Byrski says. "The cards, valid for one semester, are good for free or discounted pizza, gasoline, roller rink and movie passes. Students love them and work to get them. Two years ago, one school in the county had about 200 recipients. Now the number has doubled. Employers have signs in their windows to let people know they support the program. Tech prep is also promoted on placemats used in restaurants."

- Before a basketball game, Walker's program had a special event for ninth graders who had declared as tech prep students. "People from a local university involved with tech prep talked about the need for advanced training and higher expectations," she says. "They also stressed how the anticipated lifetime earnings of a skilled worker compared with those of a non-skilled worker. Students and parents got free tickets to the game, soft drinks and hot dogs."

You can't ever let up on your marketing efforts to students. Even if your program is so good that it virtually sells itself, you have to keep pushing. As Seattle's Butts says, "marketing must be an ongoing, continuous process, and the tech prep message needs to be moved down to the elementary and middle schools."

There are dozens or even hundreds of marketing activities you can use to attract students. Carefully consider the possibilities, select those that fit your program and your students and take off.

Chapter 8

Marketing Tech Prep to Parents

Why will tech prep be better for my child than other options?" That's the bottom line for parents. They want their child to have a better life than they've had – to be better educated, to get a better job, to have an easier time of it in general.

Selling most of them on tech prep will require hard work. As one administrator says, "We find that parents are the toughest nut to crack." They'll have concerns and questions, some of which they'll probably phrase negatively. They'll challenge you, demanding that you provide solid proof that tech prep really works. And they'll be suspicious, since lots of educational "reforms" they've seen before turned out to be nothing more than passing fads.

Don't be offended by their behavior. After all, they're after the same thing you are: the best opportunity for their child. Your goals are the same – even though at first you may be treated like the enemy.

In any dealings with parents, remember that in the past, **they** were often treated like the enemy. Schools didn't want them to "meddle," especially in the higher grades. "We've made them feel uncomfortable, not because we meant to, but because for so long school people have thought we had all the answers," Highfill says. "Years ago, parents were a part of what went on at school. Then we went through a phase where we thought we didn't need them. We **do** need them, and they are willing to help if we show them how. Parents love the feeling of making a difference."

With tech prep, parents **can** make a difference. Research indicates that while teenagers are notorious for listening to everyone except their parents, when it comes to course selection and career decisions, parents **do** have a lot of influence. Unfortunately, though, many of them are poorly equipped to help their child make career decisions.

That's where you can help. You must help parents learn about tech prep. You must help them understand all the opportunities it offers. And perhaps most of all, you must calm their fears and concerns.

"The approach to parents must stress the changes in the workplace and how the school must change in response," says North Dakota's Decker. "Let them know you are setting high standards, not 'dumbing down' the curriculum. Emphasize that four-year degrees don't necessarily mean good jobs anymore and that tech prep provides better career options for **all** students."

Once parents truly understand what tech prep is and what it can do for their child, they'll be won over. "Parents are an easy sell because we show them the relevance of our programs and our state-of-the-art equipment," says Buntzen of his New Jersey program. "We tell them we have rigorous coursework, but it's presented in an enjoyable fashion. We show them that hands-on experiences in a technical setting lead to positive results and that successful tech prep students have a much lower dropout rate."

Before parents are sold on tech prep though, you have to answer their questions. The next section of this chapter will list 10 questions they're likely to ask, along with suggested responses. We'll then explain some marketing strategies you can use to sell tech prep to parents.

10 Questions About Tech Prep

Most parents will pepper you with questions about tech prep. This makes it imperative that before you first approach parents, you anticipate their questions and have answers prepared. Below are 10 of the questions you're most likely to be asked – phrased how parents may ask them – along with responses suggested by practitioners.

1. **My child isn't ready to make career decisions in the eighth or ninth grade. Why are you trying to box kids in?**

Kentucky's Walker has a ready answer for this question. "Our answer is that it's not boxing kids in to encourage them to take more rigorous academic courses or to teach them to use applied strategies that are effective with a variety of learning styles," she says. "We have started a thought process that will help them be prepared for whatever they decide to do in the future."

You also should explain all the resources you provide to help kids make their decision: counselors, career orientation classes, trips to various businesses and so on. Parents may simply be unaware of all the groundwork you've done. "We were talking to an eighth-grade girl and her parents," says Highfill. "The father said, 'She's too young to make this

kind of decision.' The daughter said, 'I am **not** too young!' She had been prepared in her career orientation class."

2. Why are you trying to lock my child into a path that he or she can't change?

You must emphasize that tech prep doesn't lock anyone into anything. It simply lays out a plan for each child that can be readily changed at any point. Tech prep also offers multiple exit points.

"We help parents understand that tech prep is about options," says New Jersey's Yoseloff. "Their students can be involved for two years or 2+2 or 2+2+2. Parents don't want their students locked into anything."

In fact, rather than restricting a student's options, tech prep actually expands them. The 50 to 80 percent of students who would have left high school with no job skills and no solid preparation for college get both through tech prep. If they choose, they can go to work right after high school graduation with far better preparation than they would have gotten by drifting through the general studies curriculum. And if they like, they have various options for continuing their education after high school.

3. Why are you pushing tech prep when everyone knows that the only sure road to success is a four-year college degree?

Parents want the best education they can afford for their child, and most of them **know** that means a four-year college degree. You have to deal with that "truth" – and gently show them how untrue it is.

For generations, the four-year degree has been the substance of the American dream. There was a time – when the majority of young people didn't even finish high school – that a university degree **did** hold a special cachet. It represented a way to rise in the world, no matter how humble your beginnings.

That has all changed with the changes in the workplace. Today, 80 percent of the good jobs available to graduates are more likely to require two years – not four – of college. You must help parents understand that because the workplace has changed so much – and it's never going back to the "good ol' days" – major shifts in education are needed to help students compete. They also must understand that a four-year degree no longer guarantees success in life.

"The fate of four-year college graduates hasn't been great lately," Pierson says. "About two-thirds of them are un- or under-employed. Parents are starting to catch on to this. We emphasize the daylights out of the fact that young people with technical skills are going places. An associate degree isn't terminal. It's part of lifelong learning."

Virtually all practitioners emphasize that tech prep **is** a college program. After all, it's expected that every student accepted into tech prep will continue with at least two years of postsecondary education. "Most parents still measure success in terms of a four-year college degree," says Mello. "We tell them tech prep **is** a college program. We don't say it's a two-year college program; we say it's a **college** program."

In Rhode Island, Marmaras takes a slightly different approach. "We tell parents tech prep is a two-year-degree program that can lead to a four-year degree," she says.

We tell parents tech prep is a two-year-degree program that can lead to a four-year degree.

—Judy Marmaras, director of Rhode Island's tech prep program

Besides being prepared to enter college, students in many high school tech prep programs can earn one-fourth or more of the credits for a two-year degree while still in high school. Their advanced standing enables them to complete their college work sooner or to use the extra semester to take additional courses. Parents are really impressed by this. "Parents find the free college hours earned through articulation very attractive," Gutshall says.

Even kids pursuing four-year degrees can save lots of money if they complete the first two years at a community college. "For middle-class parents who aren't eligible for much financial aid, this is a cheaper way to get two years of college education," Pierson says.

Most parents are worried about paying for college. If your state is among those that now offer scholarships for tech prep graduates, be sure parents know how their student can apply. Parents also need to know that tech prep can actually help their son or daughter pay for a four-year degree. They like to hear that their student can complete a two-year program in nursing, for example, and earn $35,000 a year while continuing to pursue a bachelor's degree. It's a great deal **if they know about it**.

Finally, in talking to parents about tech prep emphasize that **all** kids – even those heading off to four-year institutions – need job skills. "We tell parents that even if their child is heading for Harvard, they're placing an undue amount of stress by sending him or her out into the world without marketable skills," Key says. "What if college doesn't work out and their child has nothing to fall back

on? We tell parents tech prep is good insurance; that maybe June and Johnny won't be living with them when they're 35!"

4. I only have a high school diploma. Why isn't that good enough for my kid?

This is the reverse of the parental belief that every student must have a four-year college degree. This question can be answered most effectively by citing statistics showing that the vast majority of good jobs in the future will require at least two years of postsecondary education.

"We tell parents this kind of education is necessary; you can't get a good job anymore with just a high school diploma," says Gutshall. "If students are interested in technical careers, this is the route to take. If they want to go on to college, they can. Tech prep provides kids with options. They get a solid foundation in basic skills that will prepare them for good jobs for which they don't need a four-year degree."

5. Isn't tech prep just warmed over vocational education with a fancy new name?

Many parents have viewed vocational education as something for other people's kids to enroll in – a decidedly second-class choice. To overcome that stigma, practitioners stress that tech prep integrates academics and technical education and that it prepares students for college.

"When parents equate tech prep with old-fashioned, traditional voc ed," says Central Texas' Roberts. "We answer this by lining up the tech prep curriculum side-by-side with the college prep curriculum and showing them that there's not a lot of difference. In reality, they're **both** college prep."

Sometimes simply changing the vocational department's name can change people's perceptions. "Some of our schools have renamed their vocational department, calling it a career academy or career technical studies to take away the vocational stigma," says Roberts.

O'Brien's Florida consortium took a similar approach, linking vocational and academic education in "academies" such as the Academy of Automotive Technology. "The word has good connotations," O'Brien says. "Three high schools in St. Lucie County that did this have the highest increase in enrollment this year."

Ultimately, though, it's students' success—not name changes—that convince parents. "Getting people to accept

tech prep is a slow process," says Helmandollar, "but the successes of students break through the stigma of programs that are 'sort of vocational.'"

6. Aren't you just trying to "track" my kid into some program for dummies?

You should emphasize that tech prep actually eliminates the tracking system. It offers **all** kids the chance to achieve to their fullest potential. "The greatest thing for parents is to realize that **all** students will have an educational opportunity – that none will be stuck in terminal programs," says Walter. "Tech prep eliminates the tracking system and maintains the latitude to prepare any student to reach whatever educational level he or she chooses."

In some parts of the country, practitioners must be particularly sensitive to the tracking issue.

7. Are these applied academics classes just "dumbed down" versions of what you teach the college-prep kids?

This is one of the easier questions to answer. Simply lay the tech prep curriculum side-by-side with the college-prep curriculum. Parents will quickly see that the two are at least equal, and that in some areas the tech prep curriculum is harder.

Explain that applied academics are different – and better – in terms of both subject matter and the way they're taught. The classes are taught so that students see how concepts are applied and can participate in hands-on activities. Make sure parents understand this is not an inferior way of learning – just different. Tell them that while teachers will set stringent standards for students, applied academics will make it easier and more fun for them to learn.

8. My kid hates school and wants to drop out. Can tech prep help him?

The answer to this question is a resounding yes. The student may hate school because he doesn't think it's relevant. Lots of traditional high school classes emphasize theories, which can be hard for some students to grasp. With tech prep's applied academics, by contrast, kids see how what they're learning applies to real life. And they get to use their hands as well as their heads.

Tech prep helps cut dropout rates. Students are more apt to stay in school and do well when they see a purpose to what they're learning, have personal goals and know exactly what

they need to do to achieve those goals. Districts that have been involved in tech prep for several years have seen the dropout rate fall by as much as 75 percent. As an added bonus, tech prep helps give students a focus and sense of direction.

9. Who says there'll be jobs available for my kid when he or she finishes tech prep?

The U.S. Department of Labor, for one. Labor Department data will help you show there will be jobs for tech prep graduates – and that graduates with four-year college degrees haven't done too well in recent years. Show parents what kinds of jobs will be available in the future, what training is required for them and what they'll pay.

Parents need to understand that tech prep prepares students for 80 to 90 percent of the jobs of the future, and that they will not be failing their child or settling for "second best" by encouraging pursuit of a tech prep program. Stress that tech prep is a complete program that includes technical skills, applied academics and opportunities for hands-on experiences in the workplace while students are still in school.

This is one area where your business partners can be especially helpful. Have some of your most enthusiastic business and industry partners speak to parent groups about the kind of employees they look for, emphasizing that they need young people who not only have technical skills but also the academic background and the workplace readiness that make them productive from day one. Make sure they also mention the mentoring, shadowing, apprenticeship and actual employment opportunities that exist for students through tech prep during and after high school.

"Parents all want their children to go to college, and it's hard to convince them that only 10-20 percent of the jobs require a four-year degree," says High. "We invite them to the sessions where business and industry people talk to students. Some parents view them as more credible than educators."

Quattrociocchi agrees. "Parents are concerned about their own jobs," she says. "It reassures them to hear business people say they will hire their sons and daughters if they have the training tech prep offers. We have to get business people to say it and mean it in the media where parents will read it or hear it. This is the most effective marketing tool we can use with them."

In South Carolina, Walter got the kind of cooperation from an employer that other practitioners would kill for. "A personnel director for a large area employer wrote an impassioned letter to parents about the relationship of education and technical training to the jobs in her company and the kinds of people she hires," Walter says. "She said every day she throws out a stack of resumes from graduates of four-year colleges because they are irrelevant to the kinds of skills she needs."

But Walter doesn't rest on her laurels. "We clip job ads from the local papers, especially those that include salaries and job requirements, compile them in a visually appealing way as brightly colored flyers and send them with registration materials," she says. "This gets a big reaction from parents, because they are seeing information put out by employers."

In selling tech prep to parents, though, nothing succeeds like success. "We emphasize success stories," says Gutshall, "like the fellow who graduated from the auto mechanics program in our tech school a few years ago, went on to technical college and now, at age 26, is making $45,000 a year. He was invited back to teach the program. He said that, although he was flattered, he couldn't afford to do it. Stories like this help to build a prestigious image for technical training."

10. Who – besides you – says this tech prep stuff really works? Is this just another fad floating through?

To answer this question, whip out your statistics and success stories from programs from around the country. They'll make it clear that tech prep really does work in cutting dropout and absenteeism rates and in boosting test scores and grade point averages. If you have statistics from your own program, so much the better. You also can call in reinforcements – employers, other parents and successful tech prep students – to back you up.

To respond to the fad issue, point to the fact there are lots of established, successful programs around the country. Tech prep isn't some half-baked notion that will disappear tomorrow. It's based on solid educational principles about integrating educational programs and making classes relevant to students. Even if the tech prep name disappears tomorrow, programs based on tech prep's principles will continue around the country.

Tools for Winning Parents' Support

Once you've anticipated parents' questions and developed your answers, you're ready to start marketing to them.

As with students, it's impossible to start marketing to parents too early. "The earlier you can reach parents, the better," says Tulsa's Hunter. In Oregon, McClure echoes that view. "The tech prep process should start early," he says. "Invite parents of sixth graders in to hear employers talk. We have to dispel the old voc ed myths parents remember from the past."

Don't wait to involve parents until it's time for their eighth grader to fill out a four- or six-year career plan. That's too late. Start sharing career information when you begin talking about careers with their elementary student. Turn up the volume in middle school. If you market well, when the student and parents sit down with a counselor to chart the future, they'll understand there are serious decisions to be made and have a good idea what the options are.

Letters. A good starting point is to send home a letter signed by the superintendent of schools, the president of the community or technical college and the mayor or Chamber of Commerce president. The letter should briefly explain tech prep and tell parents how to get more information. Most importantly, the letter will let parents know that VIPs endorse the program and that various educational institutions are working together. To be even more effective, you might ask a prominent employer to write a letter to parents. Parents listen when someone with the authority to hire their son or daughter in the future talks about the preparation needed to be employable.

It's very important to have knowledgeable people follow up on the initial contact with parents.

—Fran Holm, tech prep coordinator at Sante Fe Community College, Gainesville, Florida

"We sent a letter to the parents of all new ninth graders signed by the superintendent, the community college president and the Chamber of Commerce president," says Holm. "It stressed their partnership in this community-wide effort and the benefits to students who enroll. The same three people also signed a guest editorial in the local newspaper. We do lots of talking one-on-one, too. It's very important to have knowledgeable people follow up on the initial contact with parents. Otherwise, we get them excited and then they feel there's nothing there after all."

Holm's point about following up is well taken. Don't expect that simply sending home a letter or a brochure will educate parents about tech prep. These materials can lay the groundwork and serve as "teasers," but you'll also need personal contacts and other marketing efforts to sell your program. For best results, parents need repeated exposure to your message through a variety of media over an extended period of time.

You also have to be careful to do your marketing campaign in stages that build on one another. And you have to be sure you're ready to respond to inquiries generated by your campaign. "A couple of years ago, we blanketed parents with information sent to their homes," says Seattle's Coon. "This didn't work because they weren't prepared for it. The schools were not prepared either for the questions asked about the mailing."

Finally, it helps to "test market" materials you're developing for parents. A good audience for this is students in technical and community college classes, many of whom are parents in their early to mid-30s.

Meetings and Classroom Visits. There are lots of different meeting and classroom visit opportunities where you can present your tech prep message to parents. Here are some examples:

- Hold a tech prep fair or other career-oriented activity and send special invitations to parents.
- Make presentations to PTAs, civic and professional organizations and church groups.
- Make presentations at parents' nights. "Presentations at parents' nights provide a very good forum," says Yoseloff. "We can present an overall picture of tech prep and also spend time listening and addressing issues and concerns." At these meetings, Yoseloff also distributes lots of brochures and other promotional materials.
- Invite parents to attend all presentations you make to students about tech prep and career planning.
- Invite parents to go along on field trips to colleges to look at their programs and state-of-the-art equipment.
- Ask parents to speak to their children's classes about their jobs, the educational requirements and typical salary ranges.
- Take parents to visit business and industry partners to help them understand how class work relates to skills students will need on the job.
- Involve parents in job shadowing programs. In St. Mary's County, "we require all eighth graders to do some job shadowing, often using parents as worksite resources," says Olczak. "This helps us connect business and the schools, since parents understand the dynamics of the workplace and are connected to the schools through their kids."

- Encourage teachers to discuss careers and tech prep during parent-teacher conferences. "We'll do parent conferences differently this year," says Hagestuen of his Minnesota program, "because we believe they should talk about career plans as well as grades."

In group meetings with parents, it's nice if other parents can help present your message. Parents, like everyone else, respond best to their peers. Parents who serve on your tech prep planning committees can make good presenters.

Brochures, newsletters, and newspaper articles and ads. Virtually every program has at least one general information brochure, and many also publish a newsletter several times a year. Brochures are useful for handing out at introductory meetings, since they'll help remind parents of key points after they get home. You also can make brochures available throughout the community by distributing copies to libraries, Chamber of Commerce offices, real estate offices and government agencies.

Newsletters are good, too. Besides getting information into homes on a regular and continuing basis, their size permits inclusion of lots of pictures and stories about tech prep successes. Fill them with names and faces that parents will recognize.

"We use newsletters, rather than brochures, to spread the word about tech prep because the extra space allows us to feature lots of success stories from teachers and students," says Roanoke's Helmandollar.

In preparing brochures or newsletters, you must be sensitive to the people you're trying to reach. "We use newsletters sent home with students to market to parents," says Butts in Seattle. Remember, if parents don't read or speak English, you'll need materials in different languages.

You also can frequently get lots of publicity in local newspapers and magazines. Sometimes reporters will write the stories, but in other cases you'll need to do the writing. "We have written articles for newspapers, and an editorial co-written by four big boosters of tech prep appeared in a magazine sent to members of rural electric and telephone cooperatives," says Decker.

A few consortia even run ads in newspapers. "We use full-page newspaper ads, customized for each area in our consortium, showing sample schedules for grades 9-14," says Gutshall.

Don't forget to publicize tech prep in school publications, too. Every issue of district or school publications mailed to parents should include positive information about tech prep.

Videos. If you can afford it, produce a video just for parents. They're more interested than their children in specifics about curriculum and outcomes, and they especially like to hear employers talk about the availability of jobs for young people with technical skills. They also like to hear from other parents. "We find that parents talking to other parents is very effective," says Illinois' Nichols, "and we use them in video spots."

Once a video is completed, it's relatively inexpensive to make multiple copies. If you can afford it, place several in every school and public library and distribute them to all the local video rental stores for free checkout. Be sure to advertise widely that they're available.

A few states produce videos that can be used locally. "We use a state-produced video that's provided to all schools and public TV stations to market tech prep to parents," says Bryan Albrecht, technical education consultant for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. "Each consortium does its own marketing, with backup at the state level."

Some districts make good use of videos produced by spokesmen for career-oriented education. "We tell parents that the purpose of education is to become employable," says O'Brien, "and we use videos by Bill Daggett, Don Garrison, Gene Bottoms and Dale Parnell to convince them of this. We sell voc ed as a marketable skill going hand-in-hand with academic education, and we tell parents that kids can go either way. Vocational enrollment is up by 40 percent in our consortium this year."

Radio and TV. Many consortia have found that it pays to include representatives from all the local media on their tech prep planning committees. These people really know marketing. And if they feel like they're part of tech prep, they may offer you special advertising deals that can help stretch your marketing dollars.

Here are some tips for working with radio and TV stations:

- If you're going to buy commercial time, get viewer or listener data from the station first so you can air your ads during programs that attract the most people in the age group that includes the parents you're targeting.

- Ask the station to also contribute free time if you buy commercial time. Many stations will give you at least one free airing for each spot you pay for.
- Consider producing public service announcements, which local stations will air for free. The drawback of PSAs is that you can't control when or how often they're aired.
- Ask the station to help you produce the spot. Many will either donate production time or give you a reduced rate.
- Encourage the news departments at radio and TV stations to cover exceptional accomplishments by tech prep students and staff members. This free publicity can be priceless.
- Try to get tech prep spokesmen invited to appear on talk shows or community affairs programs produced by local radio or TV stations.
- Check into the possibility of running ads, videos or programs about tech prep on local public access cable channels. Your audience probably will be relatively small on cable, but the cost will be minimal.

Special Marketing Activities. There are lots of special marketing activities you can aim at parents. Here are just a few examples to get you thinking about activities that would work for your program:

- Ask banks, utility companies and major employers to "stuff" information about tech prep with statements, bills and paychecks. "We use notices in bank statements and business paychecks to give parents information about tech prep opportunities," says Gutshall. "We tell them that it's a four-year plan involving a different kind of college option."
- Ask employers to provide other types of assistance as well, everything from giving employees time off to attend parent conferences to displaying signs on their doors saying "We Employ Tech Prep Graduates" to running supportive articles about tech prep in employee newsletters. Make sure you have signs and articles already prepared so employers can easily help you out.
- Create a Tech Prep Hotline, staffed several hours a day by knowledgeable volunteers prepared to answer questions from parents and other community residents.
- Post tech prep signs in schools that parents will see when they visit. "We use lots of signs around the build-

ing: Tech Prep Satellite Office, Tech Prep English and so forth," says Helmandollar. "This establishes the existence of tech prep real estate and fixes it firmly in people's minds. One of the most impressive things I saw on a trip to Texas was their use of signs to identify tech prep classrooms." Mayse's South Carolina consortium also makes strong use of signs. "Workers at the state penitentiary produced metal signs for all our secondary schools that have the tech prep logo and indicate that the school is part of the tech prep consortium," she says.

- Sponsor an education conference that parents can attend. "In January 1993 we had exhibits and sessions at the Education Showcase in Bismarck, which featured changes and innovations in education," says Decker. "The event was co-sponsored by the Farmers Union, the Farm Bureau and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. We advertised statewide, with emphasis in a 100-mile radius about Bismarck. Between 2,500 and 4,000 educators and other members of the community came to hear teachers talk about applied learning."

Making Parents Educational Partners

Throughout your marketing campaign, you should impress upon parents that tech prep is a joint venture in which they play an important role. You should work hard to encourage parents to participate in establishing their child's educational and career plans.

What does this have to do with marketing? Everything. Assuring parents they'll be involved can help create a good impression of good prep, one that will go a long way toward convincing them it's the right program for their child. In addition, if parents feel good about your program and about how they're treated, they'll tell their friends. As we've said before, word-of-mouth advertising is the most effective form of marketing available. Besides, you really do need strong parental involvement to make your program work.

Most parents are pleased to be asked to share in decision making. Before they and their children actually have to make decisions, give them a copy of your tech prep handbook. Make sure it contains detailed descriptions of courses in each career program and details about how articulation works.

"We want to get parents involved with helping their children pick courses," Battist says. "We need to show them what the school is doing, but stress that they're an important part of the process, too. This is especially important at the

junior high level, when students are developing their four-year career plans. Counselors often don't have enough time and, if parents aren't prepared to help, the kids will choose courses by asking one another what to take."

When it's time for students to choose classes or careers, invite parents to conferences or meetings. "The first year we were involved with tech prep we sent a letter to the parents of every eighth grader, telling them that the session to plan their student's high school course of study was probably the most important conference of their child's life," says Arkansas' Highfill. "Of the 150 students in the Career Class that semester, only two had parents who failed to show up, and there were serious family problems in both cases. Those children picked a faculty member to be their advocate for the planning session."

In Kentucky, Walker finds it's important to involve parents in the actual registration process.

"Parents like to be invited to the high school, and they like to get a personal invitation to be involved with their child's registration process," she says. "It makes them feel a part of it and more comfortable interacting with school people. We sent a letter to parents about registration and worded it so they felt they would really miss something if they weren't there. We got both students and parents into the high school, where they hadn't been before and helped them feel at ease there."

Work hard on your marketing efforts to parents. When they're well-informed and supportive, they can be your strongest allies. They have a lot to gain: well-educated children capable of getting good jobs and becoming independent—and an empty nest!

Chapter 9

How to Budget for and Evaluate Your Marketing Activities

Any marketing campaign needs a budget. You can prepare your budget one of two ways: If you live in a fairy-tale land where money is not a problem, list everything you'd like to do for the coming year to reach your various audiences, get an estimate of costs and plan accordingly. And don't forget to pinch yourself to make sure you're not dreaming.

Or, if you're like most people and are limited in what you can spend, list all your "wants," prioritize them, get cost estimates and see how far the dollars will stretch. Then decide what must be left out – or be creative about accomplishing what your budget won't cover.

Here are some tips for stretching your dollars:

- Scour your schools for resources. Can you get kids in a marketing class to write your video script? Does a school have video production equipment you can use instead of hiring an outside company?
- See what resources are available from your business and industry partners. Many of them may have excellent in-house resources (both people and equipment) to help with planning and production. Some partners may be willing to foot the entire bill or to share the cost of marketing items, or they may agree to host activities where they provide space, refreshments and giveaways.
- Look into the availability of mini-grants to pay for specific marketing items or activities.
- Production of materials in large quantities reduces costs for everyone. See if you can join with neighboring consortia to share the cost of producing marketing materials and other projects.
- See if your state education department has the staff and budget to produce generic materials that all consortia can use. If the state can't afford to pay for the materials

outright, see if it will produce them on a cost-recovery basis.

- Ask the local media to provide free or reduced-price advertising for your program. Also investigative the possibility of having them run free public service announcements for you. And don't forget to ask their news departments to cover significant tech prep activities.

- See if a public relations or marketing firm will give you free advice on marketing and budget planning. If you're really lucky, they'll offer to produce a marketing piece for free. They also may be able to help you find ways to place radio and TV spots and print ads at reduced rates.

So how much of your total tech prep budget should go for marketing? There's no agreement among practitioners, probably because they're at different stages in program development and have widely varying amounts of money available.

In addition, expenses in various categories may change considerably from year to year. For example, it may be cheaper to print enough stationery and newsletter mastheads to last for several years than to reprint each year. An activity like a tech prep fair that begins on a small scale may expand each year, requiring a larger share of the marketing budget.

Here are a few comments from practitioners about budgeting:

- "We have never **not** done marketing because of a lack of money," says Nichols in Illinois. "We just go out and find the dollars. We have found terrific expertise available in-house, both in the schools and in business and industry. The corporate community has been very giving. They don't say no. We just have to ask them for something specific and get them involved."

- "The first year, our total budget was $54,000 and we spent $10,000 for printed materials and $2,500 for our tech prep fair," says Davis of her Kentucky program. "The second year we spent $3,000 on the fair, but had no additional printing expenses. I think you need about $5 per student for marketing to start a program and $2 per student each year after that."

- "We've spent $30,000 on printed materials over three years," says Connecticut's Gaulin. "We have a marketing theme so that everything looks the same – simple, but very elegant."

- "We had a marketing plan and a budget, but didn't use it," says Helmandollar. "We've been more into the internal marketing phase, driven by what school site teams come up with and want to do."
- "About 10 percent of our total budget is allocated to marketing," says Gutshall.

Marketing Vocational Education, published by AVA in 1988, includes a section on budgeting for a marketing plan. It reinforces what many practitioners say – there are so many variables in developing a budget that it's impossible to generalize in any meaningful way.

The book suggests that the amount of money budgeted for the three basic costs of marketing – planning, creative implementation and promotional supervision and media – be determined in relation to some of the following variables:

- the geographic size of the area you serve;
- the population of the area;
- the number of schools;
- the media coverage of the area you serve; and
- the intensity of the marketing campaign you need.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Your Marketing Efforts

You absolutely must evaluate the effectiveness of your marketing campaign. If you don't, you never know whether it's working. And a marketing campaign that doesn't work is a waste of time and money.

"Evaluation is the most neglected part of a marketing plan," wrote Deede Sharpe in the *Vocational Education Journal*. "No matter what the outcome, any plan should be evaluated to see if the objectives have been met, to find out what worked well and why, and to determine the cause of any disappointing results. Surveys, post-focus groups, enrollment figures and placement data are useful in judging the plan's effectiveness. Monthly or bimonthly evaluations allow you to assess your progress and make adjustments, if needed, midstream. A summative, or final, evaluation enables you to learn from the results of your campaign."

Unfortunately, performing an effective evaluation isn't easy. "Evaluation of the marketing effort is hard," says Los Angeles' Adler, "because it's difficult to know what item influenced a person's decision."

Practitioners use a variety of evaluation methods to try to get clear answers about what worked and what didn't. Here's some of what they do:

- **Pass out evaluation sheets at every meeting and special activity.** "We ask students to fill out a short questionnaire after each activity. It includes a question about what we can do to make it better next time," says Gaulin. "The students give us really good information." Nichols also believes in holding roundtable discussions every few months "to talk about how we're doing."

- **Conduct focus groups among the types of people you're trying to reach.** "Focus groups are a wonderful way of evaluating whether something will work," says Quattrociocchi. "They told us word of mouth and counselors were very effective."

  Helmandollar agrees. "We try out possible statements with kids, asking them whether they agree or disagree with items like, 'I plan to go to a four-year college when I graduate.' If a high percentage agree, then our materials had better say something like, 'A new route to college.' It's wise to choose things to say that people in the target population mostly accept to begin with."

- **Have the first group of people who read a new brochure or view a new video rate its effectiveness.** "We developed a rating form to be filled out by the first 100 or so people who view or read a new piece of marketing material," says Helmandollar. His rating form is popular with other practitioners. "To evaluate our tech prep fair, we did a random-sample survey of students and other participants using Ben Helmandollar's evaluation form," Kentucky's Davis says.

- **Hire an outside evaluator to assess part or all of your campaign.** "We hired an outside evaluator to look at our materials and also have a marketing committee made up of people from the field," Helmandollar says.

- **Base the success of the marketing effort on such factors as the number of students enrolled.** "The primary way we evaluate our tech prep program is the number of students who express an interest in enrolling," says Holm. "Buy-in by all the schools is another way to evaluate." In Tulsa, Hunter also looks at enrollment figures. "The number of sections in applied courses is one way we evaluate the effectiveness of our marketing efforts," he says.

Several publications offer suggestions about how to evaluate your marketing efforts. While their suggestions overlap somewhat, all have useful tips. The following are questions you should ask about your plan:

- Were your goals clearly stated, attainable and measurable?
- Has the current marketing plan met the goals you established? If not, why not?
- What revisions in your plan are needed to accomplish the established goals?
- What activities were most useful in meeting your goals? Which ones should be eliminated or changed?
- What audiences did you successfully reach, and which ones did you miss?
- Are all staff members and community representatives with a marketing role involved in carrying out the program?

The *Tech Prep Program Information Handbook*, developed with Perkins funds by the Indiana Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, also has a useful section on evaluating a marketing campaign. It suggests that you ask these questions:

- Were the main objectives of the strategy met?
- Were the target media all contacted?
- How did the actual responses compare to the projected responses?
- What has been the measurable change in awareness after the strategy as compared to before?
- What has been the follow-up with the target media? With the target audience?
- What feedback has the strategy received from peers and colleagues?
- What can be done differently to be more effective next time?

Business Strategies That Work, a booklet published by the National Alliance of Business, suggests using three methods to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing activities:

- **Anecdotal accounts/success stories.** Use real human interest stories about results that changed people's lives

to turn impersonal statistics into vignettes that will be interesting and meaningful.

- **Management (process) assessment.** Analyze the implementation of your marketing campaign to determine whether it was efficient and effective and to identify areas that need attention. For example: How could it be improved in terms of leadership, management, resources, plans, timetables, execution and staffing? Were the key stakeholders satisfied with the progress that was made? Did the program improve business/school relationships? Were the media used effectively?

- **Impact assessment.** Examine the outcome of the marketing efforts, focusing on both immediate and long-range outcomes. For example: Did students benefit? What was the impact on the local community? What was the impact on business?

According to The *PR Guide Geared to Vocational Educators*, issued by the New Mexico Council on Vocational Education, you should evaluate your marketing campaign using several methods. The following is an adaptation:

- Keep a running log of every public relations activity undertaken. Include such items as clippings of news articles and notices from TV stations that they have aired your public service spots.

- Six months after the general public information program begins, distribute a questionnaire to a random sample of the community. Ask if they have heard good things about your program recently. If yes, can they recall specifically what they heard, from whom or through what medium?

- Similar follow-up surveys can be conducted after one year, 18 months, two years and three years until results are satisfactory.

- Design and distribute a similar questionnaire to members of the school staff and business partners to learn their opinions about the quality of your internal communications.

- Ask staff members to keep track of personal contacts that build the image of tech prep.

- If funds allow, organize a door-to-door survey of a random sample of homes in the community. Ask people if they're aware of what tech prep offers, if it serves their needs and how it might be improved.

Tech Prep Marketing Strategies, published by the Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech Center, suggests four criteria as evidence of marketing success. It's a simple yet comprehensive list that covers the cornerstones of an effective tech prep program. Even a novice evaluator should find it easy to determine whether:

- More parents attend and participate in school activities for vocational programs.
- More teachers (vocational and academic) and guidance counselors know about and recommend the tech prep program.
- More students enroll in articulated classes and plan a sequence of tech prep-related coursework in their last two years of high school.
- More businesses provide financial support, mentoring, job shadowing and internships.

Pick whichever evaluation methods seem likely to work best with your program. Then sit down with your marketing committee at least every six months to review what you've done, decide what's worth continuing and what should be dropped and consider new marketing ideas.

Appendix

How to Meet the Challenges

Here are strategies for meeting objections raised by persons to whom you are marketing tech prep programs

Objections	Response Strategy
1. *There is no clear, consistent understanding of what the term tech prep connotes.*	Lack of a clear definition dooms programs to failure. A primary communication strategy must be to disseminate a clear, consistent definition in all communications and marketing pieces. Consider: "Tech prep provides exciting new educational pathways to technological careers for high school students, college students and those seeking career promotions or new careers for today and the 21st century."
2. *Tech prep sounds like vocational education, which elicits negative responses from target populations.*	Clearly differentiate tech prep from vocational education in all communications and marketing pieces. Suggest something like: "In contrast to standard vocational education programs that trained workers for specific jobs, tech prep equips the student with a broad range of academic, workplace and communications skills designed to be applicable to new technologies in a changing job market."
3. *Students from middle-class homes grow up thinking of college as the natural culmination of their academic careers, and many parents feel they have succeeded only if their children graduate with a baccalaureate degree.*	Stress that tech prep is simply a different approach to academic subjects, not a training program for the majority who may have never even considered college. Because it does include college, and perhaps even university coursework, the Tech Prep Associate Degree can be positioned as a visionary kind of college education. In a subtle way, materials directed at both parents and students should point out that the traditional baccalaureate curriculum may not always prepare people for many of tomorrow's high-tech careers. This message should be strengthened by including quotes from B.A./B.S., M.A./M.S. and even Ph.D. holders who are returning to community colleges to learn what they need to get jobs.
4. *There are conflicts between secondary and postsecondary, vocational and academic educators.*	Present tech prep as an approach that can integrate all facets of good existing programs and provide the necessary focus to benefit our primary clients: the students (whose interests often get lost in these turf battles). Appeal to the altruism of educators by positioning tech prep as a strategy for the common good.
5. *Due to the use of academics connecting theory and applications and carefully planned course sequences, classroom teachers may have to change the way they teach some subjects.*	In printed materials designed for teachers, include quotes from teachers who are enthusiastic about improved student attendance, attention and retention when subjects are taught using the academic approach of connecting theory and application. In teacher meetings, try to have such teachers present to answer questions and share their enthusiasm for the tech prep approach.

Objections	Response Strategy
6. *Classroom teachers may view tech prep as just another passing educational fad.*	Communication materials directed to classroom teachers should contain facts and figures demonstrating that high school graduates generally lack the basic education and workplace skills to find jobs in the increasingly technological job market. Many cannot pass basic skills tests. Emphasize to teachers that tech prep courses are designed to impart theoretical concepts in the hands-on way most students learn. Rather than being a passing educational fad, tech prep needs to prepare today's students for tomorrow's jobs. Emphasize that a single initiative cannot operate in isolation, but must be part of a comprehensive reform strategy like tech prep.
7. *Financial resources are in short supply.*	Elicit the support of business and industry to lobby state government for support on the basis of the potential for tech prep to improve the state's overall economic outlook by providing the trained workforce needed by business and industry.
8. *Preparing a qualified workforce will take time, so the positive results of tech prep will not be immediately apparent. This may jeopardize funding and public support.*	For a variety of reasons, our schools may not be supplying all students with the knowledge and skills to successfully enter the workforce. Tech prep provides the necessary integration of academic and workplace skills to help turn this situation around. But it won't happen overnight. Students beginning tech prep courses in ninth grade won't be entering the workforce for six years. We expect tech prep to provide the stimulus for more students to stay in school and prepare for careers, so we will be able to measure expected decreases in drop-out rates within a year or two of tech prep implementation. However, improved workforce preparedness will not be measurable for several years. It will be important to focus on the involvement of business and industry in designing curriculum and to capitalize on positive responses from business and industry to tech prep.
9. *The extent of involvement of business and industry with education and the tech prep consortia across the state varies widely from area to area.*	People promoting tech prep in areas where there is little business or industry (rural counties) will need to focus their efforts on convincing their various publics that tech prep provides transferable career skills to enable students to find satisfying jobs in a variety of fields. Tech prep teaches students to learn. In areas where there is business and industry, but no relationship to educational institutions, promoters need to encourage such relationships by soliciting input on employment needs and skills and curriculum development, emphasizing that tech prep will be preparing qualified workers for their companies.
10. *Guidance counselors are crucial to the success of the tech prep program. They must be convinced that recommending tech prep to their counselees is the right move for career success and satisfaction.*	Materials for counselors must emphasize the relationship between academic preparation and the abilities needed to be successful in the workplace. The academic approach connecting theory and application utilized in tech prep courses makes theoretical concepts practical. Students can actually learn more because what they are learning makes sense in the real world. As jobs requiring traditional baccalaureate preparation become scarcer and those requiring sophisticated technical and relationship skills increase, steering students to tech prep makes good sense for a counselor concerned about career success and satisfaction. We'll still need doctors and lawyers and professors of philosophy, but not nearly as much as computer programmers, registered nurses and child development specialists.

Objections	Response Strategy
11. *Only about 50 percent of the population ever attends the traditional four-year college, and only about 25 percent graduates. Even so, with the creation of 900,000 new jobs a year requiring four-year degrees and 1.3 million people graduating from four-year colleges, 400,000 graduates are left without the jobs for which they prepared.*	Four-year colleges may not provide the best education for many 21st century careers. This is related to the previous strategy of stressing the value of learning workplace skills to remain viable in a rapidly changing job market. We need to help people learn that both traditional baccalaureate programs and the tech prep approach can lead to fulfilling careers. Academic excellence can—and should—be the hallmark of everything we do to prepare our young people for the future.

—From *Marketing Communications Plan*, part of the Tech Prep California Outreach and Guidance Project, State Center Tech Prep Consortium.

About the Contributors

Laurel Adler is project director of the Los Angeles Area Tech-Prep Consortium and superintendent of the East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program, which is a member of the consortium. The program serves approximately 7,000 students a year and in 1990 was named by the U.S. Secretary of Education as the Outstanding Vocational Technical Program for Region IX. Adler's professional experiences span both academic and vocational areas and include having developed literacy programs for high-risk youth, instructional programs for county jail inmates, vocational training programs for high-risk and handicapped youth and a support services program for tech prep participants that includes comprehensive assessment and guidance, a peer mentoring and business mentor service, job coaching and job development and placement.

East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program
Los Angeles Area Tech-Prep Consortium
1024 West Workman
West Covina, CA 91790
818-960-3625

Bryan Albrecht, technology education consultant for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, has served as the state school-to-work and tech prep consultant in developing the state structure for tech prep and has facilitated the development of tech prep programs throughout the state. He has experience in tech prep curriculum development, staff development, marketing tech prep and preparing state and local tech prep grant applications and has worked with more than 300 school districts throughout Wisconsin and the midwest in establishing tech prep programs.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
125 S. Webster
Madison, WI 53702
608-267-9251

Kay Baker is an area supervisor of business and marketing education and has served as state tech prep coodinator for the Arkansas Department of Education, Vocational and Technical Education Division. She and the state tech prep team have helped facilitate the implementation of tech prep programs statewide. Prior to working at the Department of Education, Baker taught at the university, postsecondary vocational-technical, secondary and junior high levels. Her expertise is in curriculum development, program development and special projects.

Arkansas Department of Education
Vocational Division
Three Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501-682-1768

Bettyann Battist works with a consortium of 25 Wisconsin high schools as tech prep project director for the Northcentral Technical College in Wausau. She previously worked with area high schools as public relations coordinator, director of competency articulation and, most recently, tech prep. In 1990, the North Central Consortium was chosen by the state to develop a model tech prep program in the area of business. Battist's areas of expertise include tech prep program development, team facilitation, program marketing and developing the secondary/postsecondary connection.

Northcentral Technical College
1000 Campus Dr.
Wausau, WI 54401
715-675-3331

George Buntzen, tech prep director for the Sussex County 2+2 Tech Prep Consortium, has facilitated the growth of the program from two high schools with four programs to an active cooperative involving all nine high schools in Sussex County. Programs now include Automotive Service Technology, Agriculture/Turf Management, Computer Information Systems, Early Childhood Development, Environmental Studies, Health Care Technician (respiratory and vascular) and Legal Studies. Office Systems Technology has **total** articulation among the consortia, so it is no longer in the planning or developmental stages. Thirty-three tech prep students began their freshman year at Sussex County Community College in 1993.

Sussex County Community College
College Hill
Newton, NJ 07860
201-300-2194

Gerald Butts was director for vocational-technical and K-12 instructional technical education for Seattle Public Schools from 1988 until mid-1993. He led the design, development and implementation of a Tech Prep Community College Connection program with the three Seattle community colleges, ten high schools and three alternative schools. The program is one of nine throughout the country recently selected as a national demonstration site and has been awarded a two-year $427,000 grant. Prior to coming to Seattle, Butts was director of vocational-technical education state and federal programs for the Anchorage School District. He received the National School Board Public Relations Award in 1986 for revitalizing and strengthening vocational- technical programs involving the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage Community College and Anchorage teachers and administrators. He currently is administrator of secondary curriculum for academic and vocational-technical programs for the Peninsula School District in Gig Harbor, Washington.

Peninsula School District
1401-62nd Ave. N.W.
Gig Harbor, WA 98332
206-857-6171

Mary Byrski, director of the Southern Maryland Educational Consortium (SMEC), has coordinated the development and implementation of tech prep activities for Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties since 1991. The consortium was formed in 1989 and has since established a very comprehensive 4 + 2 tech prep model program. SMEC was the recipient of the 1992 American Association of Community Colleges Parnell Tech Prep Partnership Award and was chosen by the U.S. Department of Education as a Model Tech Prep Project in 1992. Prior to her work for SMEC, Byrski was a policy analyst and project specialist with the Michigan Human Investment Office and a program director for the Michigan Community College Association. Her diverse background includes experience in project management, staff training, mediation, policy development, marketing/public relations and grant writing.

Southern Maryland Educational Consortium
c/o Charles County Community College
P.O. Box 910
LaPlata, MD 20646
301-934-2251

Marie Coon, director of tech prep for South Seattle Community College, has been involved in facilitating the development of tech prep programs since 1988 and moved into her present full-time position in January 1993. The Seattle Tech Prep project is one of the U.S. Department of Education's Model Tech Prep Education Projects. Coon's background includes experience in program planning, institutional research, marketing and fund development.

South Seattle Community College
6000 16th Avenue S.W.
Seattle, WA 98106-1499
206-764-7933

Sarah Noe Davis is director of a Kentucky tech prep partnership that includes Christian County Public Schools, Hopkinsville Community College and Kentucky Tech-Christian County Campus. Begun in 1991, the partnership was one of the first in the state. Enrollment in the two comprehensive high schools involved is about 2,400. Davis also has duties with the school district that include Title II, Chapter II, extended school services and vocational supervision. Her diverse background includes experience in program development at the secondary and postsecondary levels, staff development, marketing, grant development and administration.

Christian County Public Schools
P.O. Box 609
Hopkinsville, KY 42241
502-887-1300

Anita K. Decker, project director for North Dakota Tech Prep, heads the statewide pilot program, including 57 high schools, five public two-year colleges and five tribal colleges. The project began in late fall of 1990 and continues as a pilot. Prior to her work with tech prep, Decker was a high school and college business education instructor and coordinator. She also has considerable experience in staff development and training.

North Dakota Tech Prep
1500 Edwards Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58501-1299
701-224-5522

Marc Doss, project coordinator of the Heart of the Ozarks Tech Prep Consortium, has assisted the tech prep development efforts in 50 school districts in south central Missouri. Prior to his involvement with the consortium, which was established in 1992, he was the industrial technology curriculum supervisor for the Springfield Public Schools.

Heart of the Ozarks Tech Prep Consortium
815 N. Sherman
Springfield, MO 65802
417-895-7250

Leslie Mack Evans recently became director of the Tech Prep 2000 Consortium located at Terra Technical College in northwest Ohio. She previously had been director of the CORD Demonstration Grant Model Site, **Oakland County Tech Prep** Consortium in Michigan, a pioneer consortium begun in 1989. Prior to that, Evans worked as a career consultant and corporate trainer with AT&T, Ford Motor Company and General Motors. Her broad background includes group facilitation, program and grants development, academic advising, placement, English and career education teaching, counseling and television advertising.

Tech Prep 2000 Consortium
2830 Napoleon Road
Fremont, OH 43420
419-334-8400

Ann Gaulin, tech prep coordinator at Three Rivers Community-Technical College, has facilitated the development of the tech prep program in Engineering Technologies in Eastern Connecticut. The Three Rivers CTC Consortium was recently recognized by the State Council on Vocational Education for its innovative program and for serving as a change agent in its part of the state. Prior to her work with the consortium, Gaulin was a technology education teacher at both the middle school and high school levels. She has also served as a tech prep consultant throughout New England.

Three Rivers Community-Technical College
574 New London Turnpike
Norwich, CT 06360
203-886-0177

Georgia Ann Grantham is assistant superintendent for the Salida School District in Colorado. She facilitated the tech prep program, an institutional reform model called "Taking on the Future—Technology," that provides workplace basics and higher educational opportunities for all students. Prior to her present position, Grantham spent 20 years as a business education/computer technology teacher.

Salida School District
P.O. Box 70
Salida, CO 81201
719-539-6145

Carol Gutshall is co-coordinator with her husband, Bill, of the North Missouri Tech Prep Consortium, which includes technical schools in Bethany, Brookfield, Chillicothe and Maryville and North Central Missouri College in Trenton. The consortium serves more than 40 high schools.

North Missouri Tech Prep Consortium
North Central Missouri College
1301 Main St.
Trenton, MO 64683
816-359-3948, Ext. 208

Lyndon Hagestuen, project coordinator for the East Central Tech Prep Consortium, has articulated program development for Pine Technical College, Pine City Schools, East Central High School, Cambridge Community College and Rush City Schools. The consortium was established in 1991. Along with coordination responsibilities, Hagestuen chairs the Special Needs Department at Pine City High School and is a community work/experience coordinator.

East Central Tech Prep Consortium
1400 6th St.
Pine City, MN 55063
612-629-7511

Ray Harry, assistant director for the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, is responsible for program approval, apprenticeship and tech prep in the state's 32 community and technical colleges. The tech prep programs are administered by the colleges and operated jointly with the state's K-12 system. His background includes experience as a machinist, teacher, local administrator and state-level administrator for the past 21 years.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
319 E. 7th Ave.
P.O. Box 42495
Olympia, WA 98504-2495
206-753-3672

C. Ben Helmandollar, director of the Roanoke, Virginia, Area Tech Prep Consortium, works locally with seven school systems and the community college and, at the state level, he serves as co-chairman of the Tech Prep Public Relations Committee. Ben has worked with the consortium, a U.S. Department of Education Model Tech Prep Education Project, since its establishment in 1986. He has taught physical science, physics, principles of technology, art and gifted studies at the secondary level. He has been a coach, guidance counselor and vocational school assistant principal.

Roanoke Area Tech Prep Consortium
P. O. Box 14007
Roanoke, VA 24038
703-857-6917

Cynthia Hicks is a regional coordinator for the Inter-County Tech Prep Consortium in Valparaiso, Indiana. It includes 54 high schools and postsecondary institutions in a four-county area. She has worked in vocational education for 13 years, including positions with a state postsecondary institution and a private vocational school in Chicago. Her background also includes experience in marketing, financial aid, recruitment and admissions.

Inter-County Tech Prep Consortium
750 Ransom Road
Valparaiso, IN 46383
219-465-7016

Carla High is the project director for the Consortium to Restructure Education through Academic and Technical Excellence (CREATE). In 1992, CREATE was selected as a Model Tech Prep Project Site by the U.S. Department of Education. The consortium is composed of four public school districts, a community college, an area vocational-technical center and a university. High's professional background includes both academic and vocational education experience. Before moving to the vocational-technical center, she taught secondary sciences.

Consortium to Restructure Education through Academic and Technical Excellence (CREATE)
Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech Center
12777 N. Rockwell
Oklahoma City, OK 73142-2789
405-720-4380

Jolene Highfill, vocational education director/tech prep coordinator of the Rogers Public School system, has facilitated the development of the tech prep program. The consortium was established in 1991 in conjunction with the Northwest Arkansas Community College of Rogers/Bentonville and the Northwest Technical Institute of Springdale. A home economics teacher for 23 years and vocational education director for seven, she is a past president of the Arkansas Vocational Association and has served on regional and national committees of the American Vocational Association. She is actively involved in the Rogers Chamber of Commerce and has served for seven years on the Northwest Arkansas Private Industry Council.

Rogers Public Schools
1114 South Mountie Blvd.
Rogers, AR 72756
501-631-3556

Fran Holm is tech prep coordinator in a consortium composed of Santa Fe Community College and Alachua and Bradford county schools in north central Florida. She has been a teacher, counselor and administrator at the elementary, middle school, high school and community college level. During 1992-93, she spoke at 11 state and national conferences on developing and integrating curriculum, business/education partnerships, training counselors for tech prep advisement and other aspects of preparing students for a technological society.

Santa Fe Community College
Building 1, Suite 110
3000 N.W. 83 St.
Gainesville, FL 32606
904-395-5366

John Hunter is the project co-director of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, Tech Prep Team, which is in its third year. Team schools include Berryhill, Broken Arrow, Glenpool, Jenks, Tulsa and Union public school districts, Tulsa Junior College and Tulsa Technology Center. The other co-director of the project is Flo Potts of Tulsa Junior College, and Barbara Jacobs serves as coordinator and career guidance specialist.

Tulsa Technology Center
3420 S. Memorial
Tulsa, OK 74145
918-627-7200

Cassy B. Key, director of the Capital Area Tech-Prep Consortium (CATPC) in Austin, Texas, has a professional background including 30 years of varied experience, which includes: reporting and editing; teaching at the secondary, community college and university levels; financial development; marketing; curricula development; and consortia creation and leadership. CATPC, which is two years old, includes 32 districts, 16 articulating postsecondary partners and numerous employers. Thanks to its high-performing district tech prep directors, it had approximately 7,000 students in the tech prep pipeline in FY 93 and was a U.S. Department of Education Model Site. CATPC is constantly strengthened and enlightened through its collaboration with Texas' 24 other tech prep consortia.

Capital Area Tech-Prep Consortium
5930 Middle Fiskville Road
Austin, TX 78752
512-483-7825

Linnea LoPresti is director of the Genesee Region Tech Prep Consortium, a collaborative effort between Genesee Community College and the secondary school districts and vocational centers in three rural counties of western New York. The consortium was established in 1991 and is funded through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act. LoPresti has administered programs for students at risk and taught at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. Her diverse background also includes marketing, staff development, career guidance and grants development.

Genesee Community College
One College Road
Batavia, NY 14020
716-343-0055, Ext. 378

Carol Lowe taught junior high and high school English for 18 years before becoming tech prep coordinator for a consortium of 17 school districts and a technical college. As an English teacher, she wrote extensive curriculum designed to better address the needs of all students, not just the college bound.

Eastern Idaho Technical college
1600 S. 2500 E.
Idaho Falls, ID 83404
1-800-662-0261

Judy Marmaras has been director of the statewide tech prep program in Rhode Island since its beginning in 1987. It has received national recognition from the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and is one of the U.S. Department of Education's Model Tech Prep Education Projects. It involves more than two-thirds of the high schools in the state, with more than 2,000 high school students and 500 students at the Community College of Rhode Island. In 1993, 75 percent of the high school tech prep graduates continued in a postsecondary program. Marmaras previously taught at the elementary and secondary levels and developed and coordinated a college re-entry program for single parents. She currently teaches a graduate course on program development.

Community College of Rhode Island
400 East Ave.
Wrwick, RI 02886
401-825-2143

Sally Mayse is the coordinator of the Lowcountry Tech Prep Consortium, popularly recognized as Jump Start. The consortium includes Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties in the southern coastal area of South Carolina. Prior to her present position, Mayse spent 15 years teaching social studies in secondary schools in Virginia, Alabama and South Carolina.

Her teaching experience led her to develop hands-on, applied courses in American studies, economics and small business development at the high school level. She has made national presentations on promoting tech prep.

Lowcountry Tech Prep Consortium
P.O. Box 507
Varnville, SC 29944
803-943-4623

Larry McClure and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) have been supporting the tech prep movement in the Pacific Northwest since its inception. The laboratory provides a variety of research, development and training services to schools and colleges alike.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main
Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
503-275-9597

Lawrence T. Mello has served as coordinator of the East Valley Tech Prep Consortium in Arizona for two years. Located just east of Phoenix, the consortium includes five community colleges and 18 secondary schools. Prior to this work, Mello was a teacher, principal and central office administrator. He has conducted hundreds of workshops and seminars in schools throughout the country. His presentations are grounded in current research on organizational change, effective teaching and learning and leadership competency.

East Valley Tech Prep Consortium
1833 W. Southern
Mesa, AZ 85202
602-461-7216

Jack D. Miller is dean of professional technical development for Mt. Hood, Oregon, Community College District and has served as chair of the Mt. Hood Regional Cooperative Consortium since its formation in April 1986. In addition to the college, the consortium includes eight high schools, an alternative high school, the Multnomah County Education Service District, JTPA and the Oregon Employment Service. Miller also serves as project director of the Mt. Hood National Tech Prep Demonstration Center, one of the national demonstration sites funded by the U.S. Office of Education.

Mt. Hood Community College District
26000 S.E. Stark Street
Gresham, OR 97030
503-667-7313

Betty Musgrave is director of the Tech Prep Project operated by the Franklin County Regional Delivery System in Benton, Illinois, which includes Franklin, Hamilton and Jefferson counties and Rend Lake College. In operation since 1990, the delivery system also has a minigrant to collaborate in applied academics with state and local objectives. Musgrave has established the Tech Prep Academy to train teachers to teach academics with applications. She previously was system director for the Rend Lake Area Regional Delivery System and taught business education at Southern Illinois University.

Franklin County Regional Delivery System
Tech Prep Project
202 W. Main
Benton, IL 62812
618-438-9711

Julia Nichols is system director of Career Education Associates of North Central Illinois (CEANCI), an educational cooperative of 13 districts. She has been involved in the development of tech prep in Boone, Winnebago and Ogle counties since 1990. An apprenticeship program and extensive staff development components have been developed in partnership with Rock Valley College, business partners, secondary schools and the Illinois State Board of Education, Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education. Nichols says she "does not remember life before tech prep," but has 15 years of secondary teaching experience and worked as a local vocational director prior to becoming the director of CEANCI.

CEANCI
5279 28th Ave.
Rockford, IL 61109
815-226-1755

Paul O'Brien is coordinator for the Quad-County Tech Prep Consortium, which includes Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee and St. Lucie counties and Indian River Community College in Fort Pierce, Florida. The consortium received the American Association of Community Colleges Parnell Tech Prep Award for 1993 and was the sole winner of the 1993 Excellence in Tech Prep award from the U.S. Department of Education as one of the nation's exemplary tech prep programs. Before assuming his present position in 1990, O'Brien taught math and computer science at the high school and college levels for 12 years.

Indian River Community College
3209 Virginia Ave.
Fort Pierce, FL 34981
407-462-4886

Stephen G. Olczak recently was named principal/supervisor of career and technology education at St. Mary's County Technical Center in Maryland, where he has spent 25 years as a teacher, football coach, high school administrator, supervisor of instruction and director of personnel. From 1988-93 he was principal of Chopticon High School in Morganza, where, since 1991-92, all incoming ninth graders have enrolled in the Tech Prep Success Program. For the past two years, Olczak has spoken at state and national conferences and has provided programs, staff development seminars and consulting services to tech prep consortia and school systems across the U.S. During the summers of 1992 and 1993, he served as a faculty mentor at the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) at the University of California at Berkeley.

St. Mary's County Technical Center
Route 1, Box 49-2
Leonardtown, MD 20619
301-475-5501

Tom Pierson is director of career-technical education for the Marquette-Alger Intermediate School District and chairperson of the Central Upper Peninsula Vocational-Technical Education and Employment Coalition, which coordinates tech prep development in a large six-county area with 27 school districts, three area tech centers, a community college and a university. He has worked as a high school vocational teacher, a community college instructor, a university teacher educator and an apprenticeship-related instructor. For the past 20 years, he has coordinated the development of regional K-12 career education, vocational, JTPA and other site-based training programs.

Marquette-Alger Intermediate School District
427 W. College Ave.
Marquette, MI 49855
906-226-5139

Nadine Possehl, tech prep coordinator at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, has facilitated the development of tech prep programs in Douglas, Sarpy, Washington and Dodge counties in Nebrasha through a con-sortium established in 1990. Prior to her work with tech prep, she owned and operated a small business, practiced social work and was administrator of a proprietary school.

Metropolitan Community College
P.O. Box 3777
Omaha, NE 68103
402-449-8431

Susan Quattrociocchi, (a.k.a. "Dr. Q."), has been director of the Northeast Tech Prep Consortium since May 1992. The consortium includes four techni-cal and community colleges, nine school districts and 30 high schools. Career clusters include Business Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing, Environmental Sciences, Electronics and Health Occupations. Her background includes nine years of high-level administrative experience in the U.S. Department of Labor Manpower Programs and 12 years of vocational education administration.

including associate dean of instruction at Everett Commun-ity College in Everett, Washington.

Northeast Tech Prep Consortium
Bellevue Community College-JR1
3000 Landerholm Circle, S.E.
Bellevue, WA 98007-6484
206-649-3148

Jimmy Roberts has worked as the curriculum coordinator for the Central Texas Tech Prep Consortium since March 1992. Prior to coming to the con-sortium, he worked in the public school system as a curriculum director, an administrative offi-cer and a teacher of social sciences and mathematics. His background also includes working as a marketing representa-tive and artist for an architectural illustration firm.

Central Texas Tech Prep Consortium
2600 South First St.
Temple, TX 76504
817-773-9961

Myrtle Stogner is executive director of the North Carolina Tech Prep Leadership Development Center and the U.S. De-partment of Education National Tech Prep Demonstration Site—since 1984-85 a partnership of Richmond County Schools, Richmond Community College and business and in-dustry. The model has documented results since 1986. The county schools have 8,000 K-12 students and the community college has approximately 1,500. Richmond County is a largely rural area with textile manufacturing and service industries providing the major opportunities for employment. Stogner taught home economics, English and biology and was director of vocational education when the tech prep model was devel-oped and implemented. She has experience in the implementa-tion of all the components of a successful tech prep initiative and has been involved in the development of the tech prep concept, not only in Richmond County, but throughout North Carolina and in many other sites across the United States.

North Carolina Tech Prep Leadership Development Center
Box 1189
Highway 74 West
Hamlet, NC 28345
919-582-7187

La Donne Walker, instructional supervisor for the Marshall County (KY) School District, directed the development of tech prep in the district, beginning in 1993. She is a former aca-demic teacher, vocational teacher and school counselor. Under her direction, Marshall County received one of the state's ini-tial federal grants. Mrs. Walker retired in July 1993 and is available as a consultant.

Marshall County Board of Education
Route 7, Box 102
Benton, KY 42025
502-527-8628

Diana M. Walter, executive director of the Partnership for Aca-demic and Career Education (PACE), has facilitated the devel-opment of tech prep pro- grams in Anderson, Oconee and Pick-ens counties in South Carolina since 1988. PACE is one of the U.S. Department of Educations's Model Tech Prep Education Projects. The consortium was established in 1987 and has a current tech prep enrollment of 4,254. Prior to her work at PACE, Ms. Walter was a community college teacher, adminis-trator and counselor. Her diverse back-ground includes experi-ence in program development, faculty/staff develop-ment, stu-dent assessment, advising, marketing and grants development.

Partnership for Academic and Career Education
P.O. Box 587, Highway 76
Pendleton, SC 29670
803-646-8361, Ext. 2107

Darlene Yoseloff is the coordinator of the Office of School Re-lations and the tech prep coordinator for the Middlesex Tech Prep Initiative, which is in its third year. It is an expanding partnership that includes the college, nine county school dis-tricts and business and industry representatives. Mrs. Yose-loff's experiences include program development for students, teachers and adult education and job development and work readiness seminars

Middlesex County College
155 Mill Road
Edison, NJ 08818
908-906-2554

Annotated Bibliography

The references in this section were used in writing the Tech Prep Marketing Guide. Readers may find them helpful in planning their own marketing activities.

American Careers, Career Communications, Inc., 6701 W. 64th St., Suite 304, Overland Park, KS 66202. Barbara Orwig, publisher.

This magazine, published in the fall, winter and spring, to provide career information to junior high and senior high students, often includes articles about tech prep.

Beyond Articulation: The Development of Tech Prep Programs.* Carolyn Dornsife, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California-Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1992

This book includes a 13-page chapter on marketing campaigns and samples of newsletters and other materials.

Building a Transportable Model for Tech-Prep Systems Geared for the Twenty-First Century.* doctoral dissertation, Casandra Burleson Key, University of Texas at Austin. 1991. 430 pp.

This very readable study focuses on the development of the tech program at Leander High School and Austin Community College, but has a wealth of information that would be of interest to any practitioner. It includes a section on developing a public relations campaign for tech prep.

Communicating About Restructuring.* Education Commission of the States, 707 17th St., Suite 2700, Denver, CO 80202-3427. 1991. 108 pp.

This book includes chapters on getting started with a state or district communication plan, building support, describing restructuring, getting the message out, working with the media, showing progressand anticipating and responding to criticism. This material was developed for participants in the Coalition of Essential Schools program, but many of the ideas would be useful to tech prep practitioners, as well.

Communications by Design.* Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777. 1981. 93 pp.

This public relations handbook includes chapters on planning, laying the foundation, making news, brochures that work, using displays and posters, special events and presentations, talk shows and PSAs. A good basic guide with samples.

Corporate Action Package, a series of five booklets, National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20005. 1989. Titles include: *Corporate Action Agenda: The Business of Improving Public Education* (executive summary), 13 pp.; *A Blueprint for Business on Restructuring Education*, 38 pp.; *America's Leaders Speak Out on Business-Education Partnerships*, 35 pp.; *Business Strategies That Work*, 46 pp; and *Who Will Do the Work?*, 24 pp.

These booklets, written before tech prep programs were widespread, make interesting reading for tech prep practitioners. They give an excellent overview of the concerns business and industry have about the state of education and their ideas for increasing school/business cooperation. Many of their ideas will sound familiar and will suggest common ground on which to base relationships.

Getting Started in Tech Prep.* Dan Hull, Center for Occupational Research and Development, (CORD), P.O. Box 21689, Waco, TX 76702-1689. 1992. 161 pp.

This book includes a section on developing brochures and presentations for various groups, with sample publications and overhead masters to accompany presentations.

Handbook on Marketing Vocational Education, Ohio Council on Vocational Education, 750 Brooksedge Blvd., Suite 105, Westerville, OH 43081. 1989. 29 pp.

This booklet, based on a series of interviews with vocational educators in Ohio who have had successful experiences in marketing vocational education, includes their list of the 25 most successful activities, brief descriptions of 80 other activities, challenges, observations and recommendations.

"How to Market Vocational Education," Deede Sharpe, *Vocational Education Journal*, October 1986, pp.30-32.

This article by the president of Sharpe Programs, Inc. (formerly manager of educational program development for Walt Disney World), discusses ways to identify the "hot spots" of target audiences in order to develop marketing messages that will gain their attention.

"Image Control," Deede Sharpe,*Vocational Education Journal*, January 1993, pp. 24-25, 55.

Tips on image building for educational programs, with an emphasis on the importance of internal audiences.

Marketing Communications Plan.* part of the Tech Prep • California Outreach and Guidance Project, State Center Tech Prep Consortium, 390 W. Fir Ave., Clovis, CA 93611. 1993. 126 pp.

This is an extensive, detailed plan which includes goals, messages and suggested activities for marketing tech prep to students, parents, educators, business and industry, government officials and print, electronic and public service media. It also includes: a marketing communications planning guide for consortia directors; logo slick sheets; a graphic standards sheet; sample response cards for various groups; a sample press release and PSA; tip sheets on dealing with the media, preparing printed materials, making effective presentations, advertising and planning and carrying out special events; and executive summaries of local and national research. While the materials and activities are designed for tech prep practitioners in California, it is a wonderful resource which could easily be adapted for use elsewhere.

Marketing Vocational Education: A Handbook for Vocational Educators.* American Vocational Association, 1410 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314.1988. 144 pp.

This marketing handbook includes chapters on image building, the marketing concept, communicating with external publics, advertising using mass media for publicity, special events, National Vocational Education Week, print messages, special media and developing a marketing plan and budget. While it contains enough basic information to get a beginner started on a marketing campaign, there are also many suggestions and techniques to benefit the more experienced practitioner.

PR Guide Geared to Vocational Educators.* New Mexico Council on Vocational Education, 202 Central, S.E., Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87102, 1989, 17 pp.

This booklet includes some good ideas for PR/marketing activities and a short section on research and follow-up.

Promoting Tech Prep Programs. Roanoke Area Tech Prep Consortium, P.O. Box 14007, Roanoke, VA 24038, undated, 26 pp.

This booklet includes a five-page outline for developing a marketing campaign, sample marketing materials and other items.

Tech Prep/Associate Degree: A Win/Win Experience. Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), P.O. Box 21689, Waco, TX 76702-1689, 1991, 408 pp.

Written and compiled by Dan Hull and Dale Parnell, this book includes articles by the authors and 29 other tech prep practitioners. It includes a chapter on recruiting and retaining students, "Getting 'Em and Keeping 'Em," and much additional information that would be useful when designing a marketing program.

Tech Prep Implementation Status Survey and Self-Assessment. Ben Clay, Kansas Competency-Based Curriculum Center, Washburn University, 1700 S.W. College, Topeka, KS 66621, 1993. 16 pp.

This document includes two sections relevant to the evaluation of marketing activities.

Tech Prep Marketing Plans. Southern Maryland Educational Consortium, Charles County Community College, P.O. Box 910, Mitchell Road, La Plata, MD 20646, 1991. 20 pp.

This document, developed to cover an 18- to 24-month period, suggests objectives, products, benefits, promotional mix and timeline for marketing to secondary students, parents, secondary school and community college personnel and businesses.

Tech Prep Marketing Strategies. Carol Adams, CREATE, Francis Tuttle Vo-Tech Center, 12777 N. Rockwell, Oklahoma City, OK, 73142-2789, undated, 13 pp.

This booklet includes the outline for the marketing campaign developed by the Center to Restructure Education through Academic and Technological Excellence (CREATE), their marketing goal, a list of their committees and other items.

Tech Prep Program Information Handbook. * Indiana Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, Indiana Government Center South, Room E-204, 10 North Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204-2277. 1992. 132 pp.

Another excellent resource manual, this loosleaf notebook is designed for use in Indiana, but would be valuable elsewhere, as well. It includes lots of general information about tech prep and many sample materials. There are chapters on the program, articulation, curriculum, getting started, partnerships, resources, creating excitement (marketing), idea exchange and appendices of reference information.

Tech Prep State-of-the-Art Report. * National Network for Curriculum Coordination (NNCCVTE), East Central Region, Sangamon State University, F-2, Springfield, IL 62794-9243, 1993

This publication from the National Tech Prep Clearinghouse includes abstracts of state tech prep projects, descriptions of federal exemplary projects, evaluations and trends evident from current data. In the fall of 1993, the Clearinghouse will provide a database of tech prep program information in addition to the resource materials shared by state and local programs.

The references that follow were not used for this book, but have been recommended by tech prep practitioners.

A Model Plan for Promoting Vocational-Technical Education. West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, WV

"Apprenticeships: A Few Good Crusaders," article, *Industry Week*, January 4, 1993, pp. 23-24

Go For It! A Vocational Technical Education Promotional Handbook. Indiana Commission on Vocational and Technical Education, Indianapolis, IN, 1990

Handbook of Publicity and Public Relations for the Nonprofit Organization. Robert H. Ruffner, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984

Illinois Tech Prep Planning Strategies. Debra Bragg, Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield, IL, 1991

Implementing Tech Prep: A Guide to Planning a Quality Initiative. Debra Bragg, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California-Berkeley,Berkeley, CA, 1992

Promoting Vocational Education., West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, WV

Tech Prep Reprint, *includes* five articles on tech prep *from Vocational Education Journal*, April 1992.

The Creation of Consent. Charles S. Steinberg, Hastings House, New York, NY, 1975

This Is PR: The Realities of Public Relations. Wadsworth Publishing, Belmont, CA, 1976

* Starred references may be borrowed for two weeks from the National Tech Prep Clearinghouse, Sangamon State University, F-2, Springfield, IL 62794-9243. Call 1-800-553-TECH (in Illinois, 1-800-252-IBCC) or FAX 217-786-6036 to request printouts (updated at the time of your request) of their complete listing of resource materials in the areas of tech prep and public relations/ marketing. These include articulation plans, videos, instructional programs, handbooks, workshop materials, model program development projects, program guides, promotional materials, curriculum guides, reports and manuals. There is no charge except for the cost of returning borrowed materials to the Clearinghouse.

American Vocational Association
1410 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314